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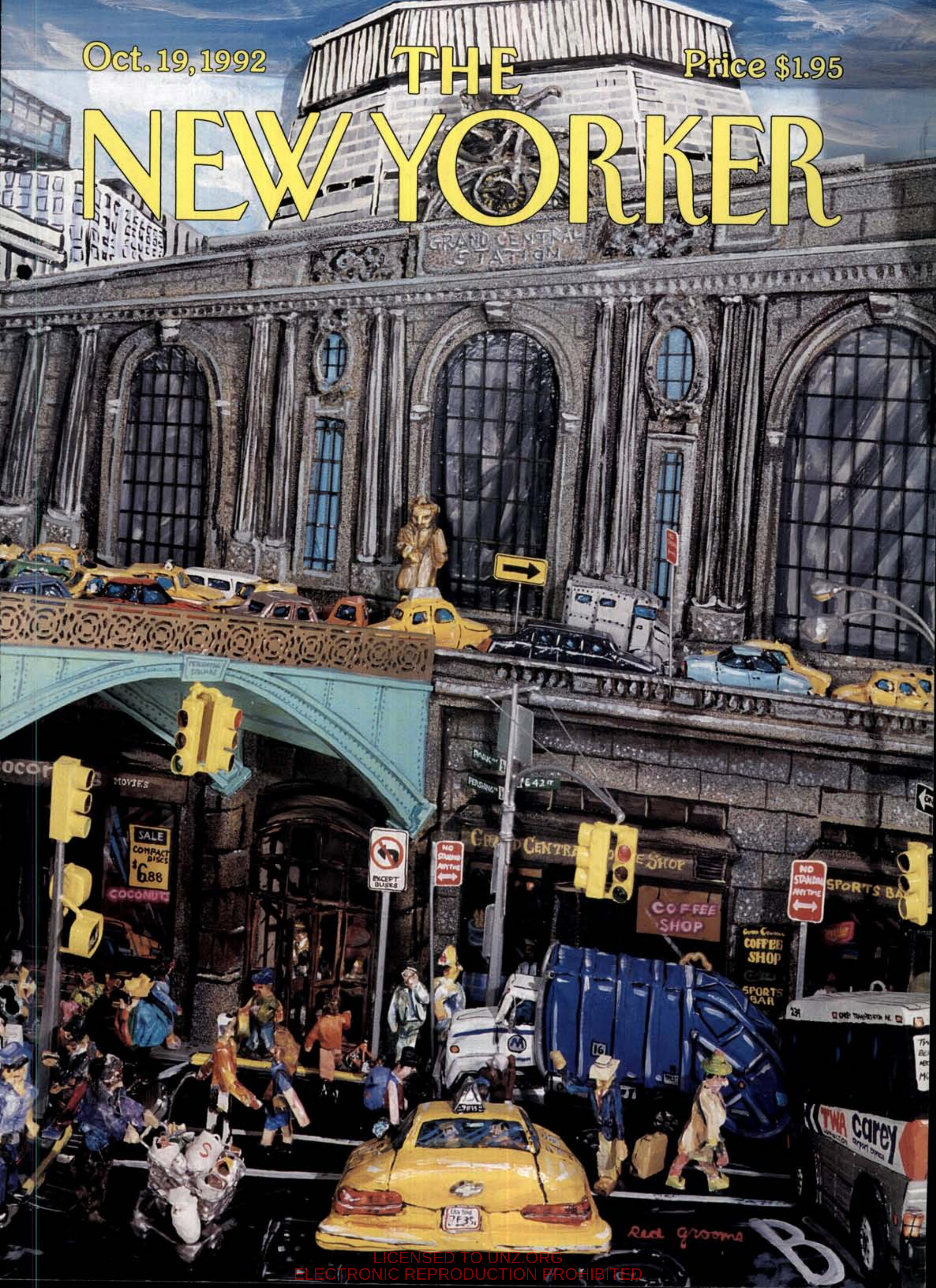
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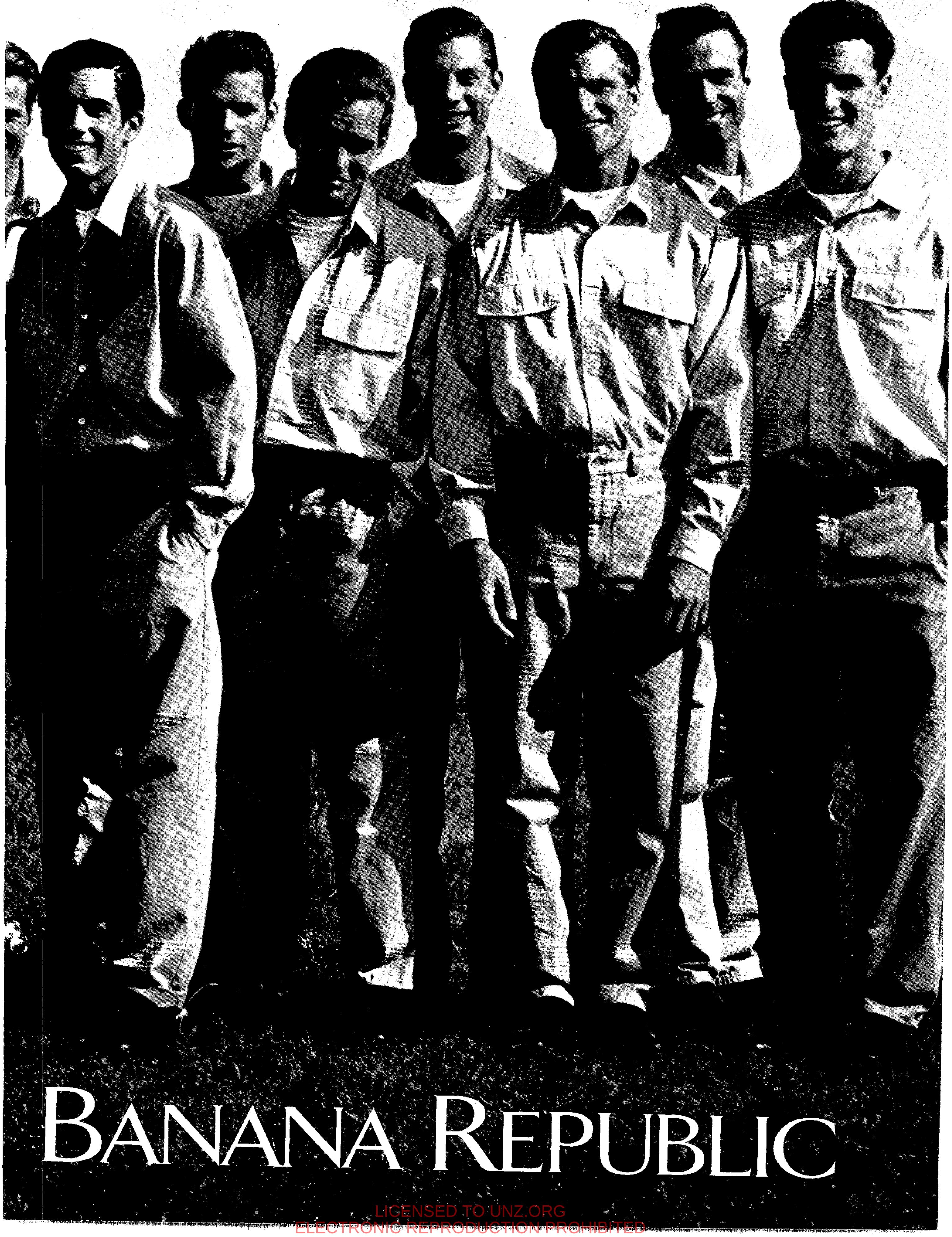
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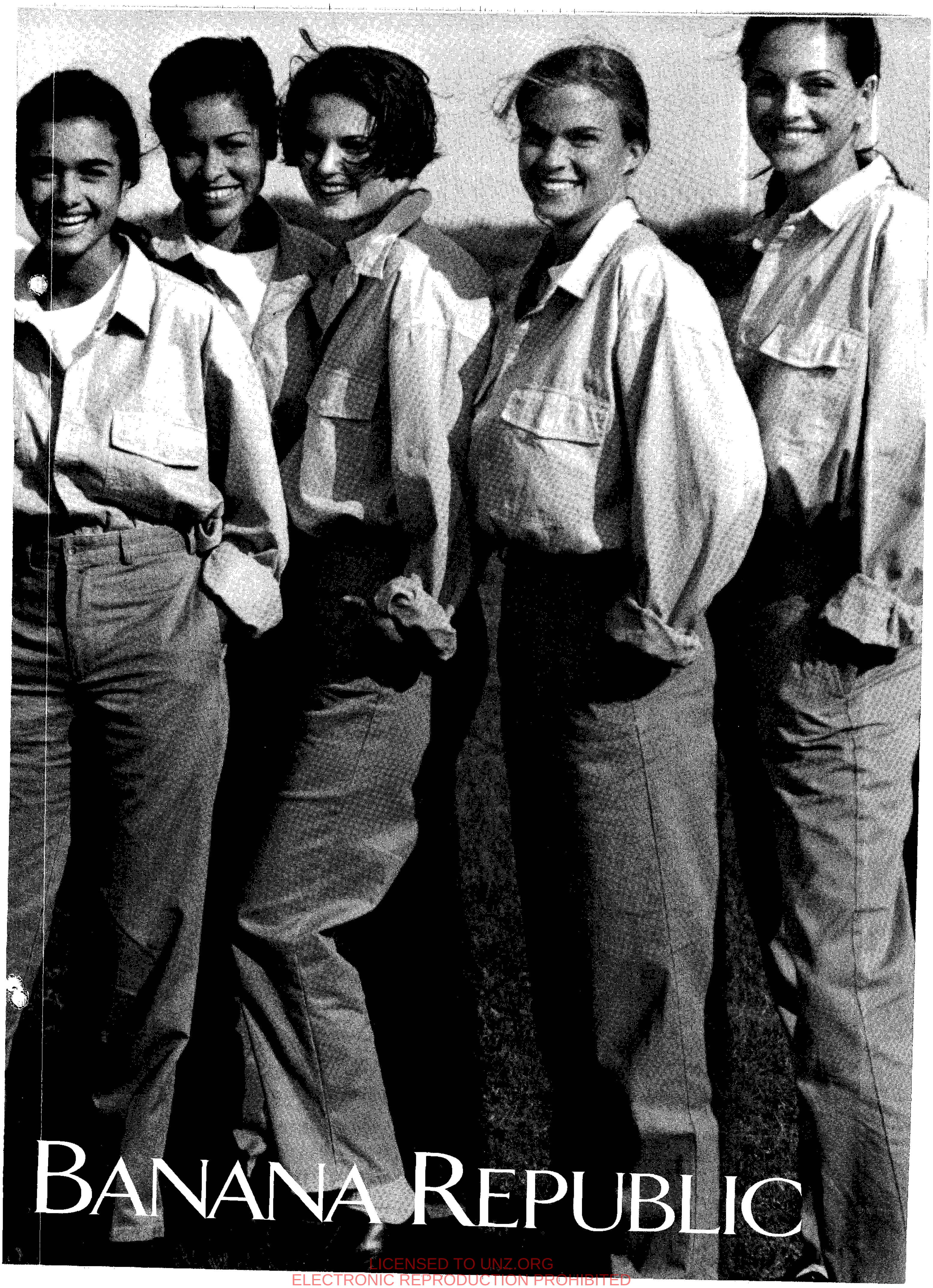

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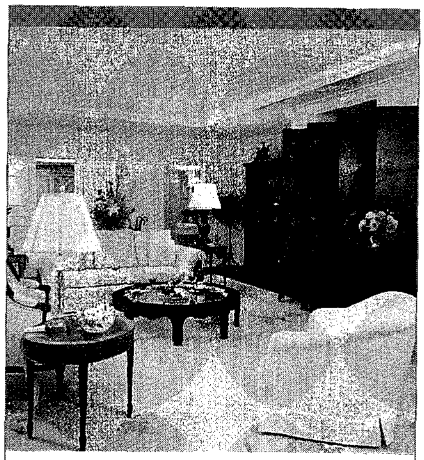

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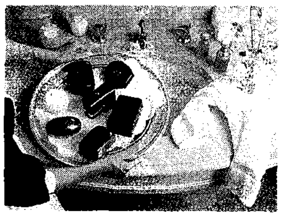

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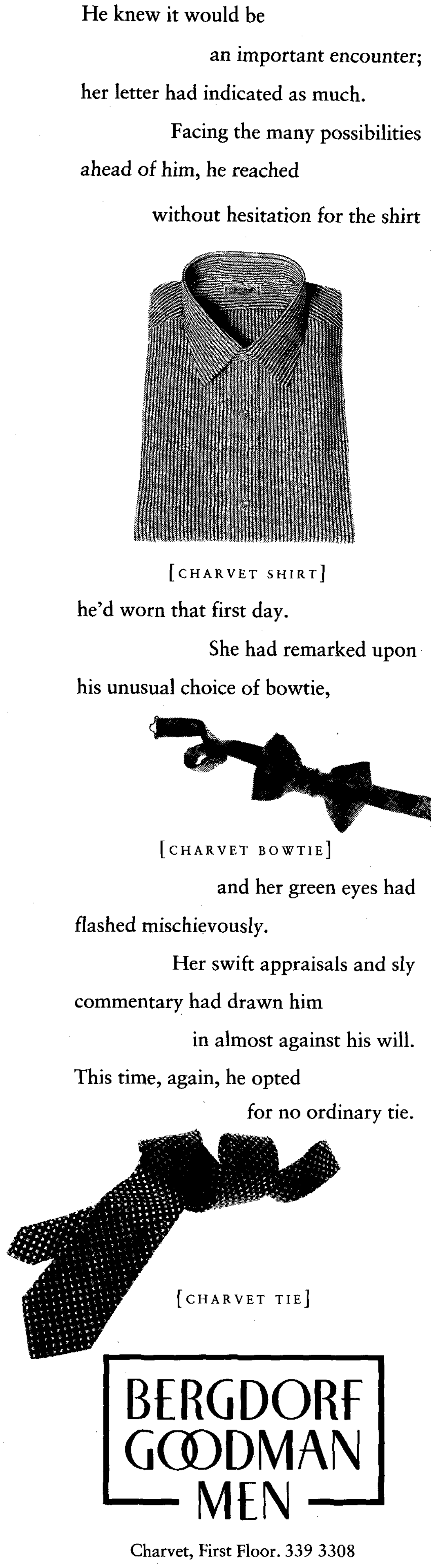

He knew it would be
an important encounter;
her letter had indicated as much.
Facing the many possibilities
ahead of him, he reached
without hesitation for the shirt

[CHARVET SHIRT]

he'd worn that first day.
She had remarked upon
his unusual choice of bowtie,

[CHARVET BOWTIE]

and her green eyes had
flashed mischievously.
Her swift appraisals and sly
commentary had drawn him
in almost against his will.
This time, again, he opted
for no ordinary tie.

[CHARVET TIE]

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COMMENT

THE THIRD MAN

ONE of Ross Perot's pet prescriptions for America's future under a Ross Perot Presidency is the innovation he calls the "electronic town hall." President Perot, in his capacity as national C.E.O., will go on television to lay out the pros and cons of some important issue, after which the people, in their capacity as "owners of the country," will hit the phones to express their views. The C.E.O. (and such lesser corporate officers as the members of the House and Senate) will then do whatever it is the stockholders have told them to do. Real simple. Done deal.

The stockholders got a taste of what Perot's brand of technological plebiscitarism might actually entail during the run-up to his disclosure that he would be a candidate for President of the United States after all. On CNN's "Larry King Live," a favorite soapbox, and on NBC's "Today" show, the Texas tycoon recited a toll-free telephone number. His employees put out the word that voters wishing to advise him on whether to make the run should use that number to share their thoughts with him. Those who did just that found themselves listening to the following recorded message: "Thank you for calling United We Stand, America. Your call is very important to us and will be included in our total of callers supporting Ross Perot." *Click.* One reporter assigned to the story told a friend, "I voted for the guy three times just getting the exact wording."

This could only happen in America, but there was something un-American about it all the same. A similar pattern of programmed unanimity prevailed in the other half of Perot's consultation with the masses, the polling of "the volunteers." In Arizona, for example, about twenty-five people got together at the state Perot headquarters, in Phoenix, and voted, twenty-five to nothing, for Perot to get back in. Well—not voted, exactly. "It wasn't that formal," Perot's Arizona coördinator told Steven A. Holmes, of the *Times.* "I said, 'Do you urge Mr. Perot to reënter,' and everybody applauded." The persons thus canvassed, needless to say, did not include the overwhelming majority of the volunteers—the earnest folk who were originally attracted to Perot, and who after July 16th, when he said he was quitting the race, drifted away in anger or puzzle-

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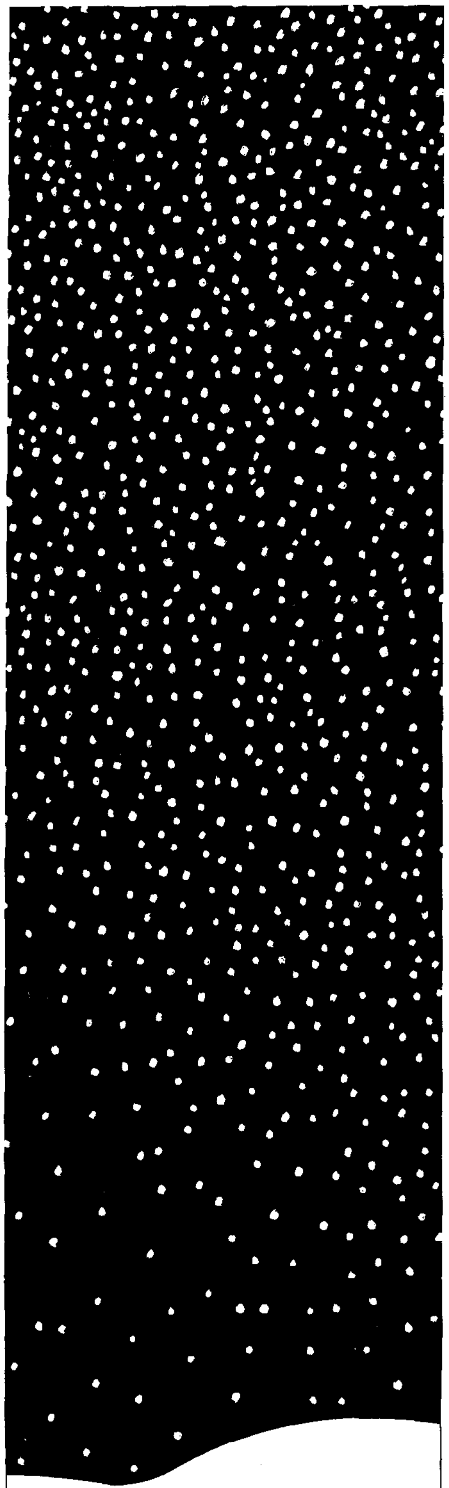


LIFE IS TOO SHORT
AND WINTER IS TOO LONG.

NOT NECESSARILY.

SAGA
MINK
OF SCANDINAVIA

ment. The climax of Perot's curious referendum came at the end of September, when a rump mini-convention of some fifty people active in Perot's interim organization "asked" him to run—unanimously, of course. Some of these quasi delegates were on the Perot payroll. All had been brought to Dallas and quite comfortably housed at Perot's expense—no big deal, but worth noting because of Perot's frequent contention that Congress has been corrupted by low-priced haircuts and free parking spaces. As an exercise in democratic choice, the entire charade was as unconvincing as a pre-Gorbachev session of the Supreme Soviet. (*Stormy applause, all rise.*)

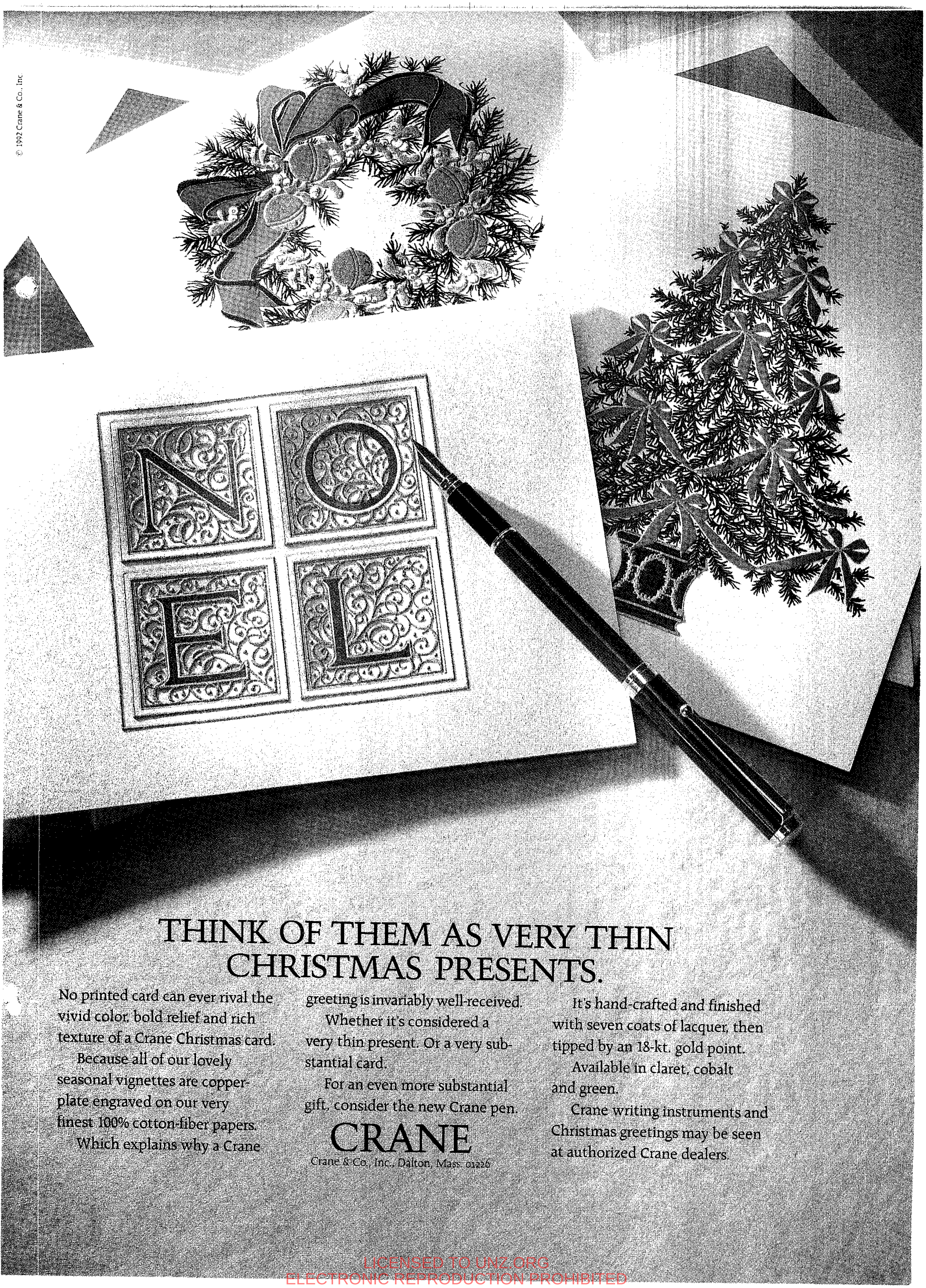
What makes all this relevant as well as silly is that Perot has been allowed into the televised Presidential debates, where he does not belong. He is there because the formats of the debates have been set not by some independent authority with the clout to make rules and make them stick—for no such authority exists—but by a bargain between the campaigns of President Bush and Governor Clinton, both of which calculated that the political costs of keeping Perot out would exceed the political costs of letting him in. Perot is there, in other words, because of exactly the kind of perverse political gridlock he is supposed to be running against.

Perot's claim to participation rests on two arguments. The first is that he has succeeded in placing himself on the ballot in all fifty states. But the Libertarian candidate, Andre Marrou, has met the same threshold without reaping the same reward. The second argument is that public-opinion polls show Perot to have a significant degree of popular support—around ten per cent. But this argument is clouded by the fact that these same polls show enormous majorities opposed to his very presence in the race. In the poll conducted by the *Times* and CBS News after Perot reëntered the race, for example, seventy-two per cent said that he should not have done so.

Perot is different from other third-party candidates, and not just because he has no party. Unlike the old Socialists or the new Libertarians, Perot does not represent an intellectually coherent, politically organized point of view. Unlike the Bull Moosers of 1912, the Dixiecrats and the Progressives of 1948, the George Wallace movement of 1968, or the John Anderson campaign of 1980, Perot does not represent an important but disaffected wing of a major party. And, unlike the Republicans of the eighteen-fifties, Perot does not represent a new force capable of displacing one of the existing parties of government. What he represents, mostly, is his money. It is his proclaimed readiness to spend his money that has been the decisive source of his ability to command the attention of "Larry King Live" and the other infotainment television programs that have made him what he is. True, Perot has about him an air of rough-hewn candor. But, to paraphrase Al Capone, you can do more with an air of rough-hewn candor and a billion dollars than with an air of rough-hewn candor alone.

The insurgents of the past whom Perot most resembles are William Randolph Hearst, in 1904, and Henry Ford, in 1920. Like theirs, his appeal is populist, technocratic, moralistic, personalistic. But Hearst, the media manipulator, and Ford, the eccentric billionaire, sought power within the confines of their parties—the Democratic and the Republican, respectively.

Perot scorns the parties, and in this he has struck a chord. The parties are in disrepute. It is unfashionable to defend them. Yet they are worth defending. Under America's winner-take-all, no-runoff, plurality system of voting, it is both natural and desirable for general elections to be fought between two large coalitions, one to the right and the other to the left of center. The Republican and Democratic Parties are those coalitions. The "two-party system" is not the result of some collusion to shut out unconventional views; it is the inevitable consequence of a particular electoral system. The parties are the vehicles for a process of choosing candidates and programs which, for all its well-known grotesqueries, is both democratic and exacting. By going through it, Bush and Clinton earned their place in the debates. Like Rosie Ruiz, who in 1979 took the subway to the last mile of the New York Marathon, Perot has joined the race within sight of the finish line. There is no obligation to treat him as if he had arrived on foot. ♦



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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18	19	20	21			

THE THEATRE

Jacques of Ages

"Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris" may not have chalked up the greatest number of Off Broadway performances over the years, but it has almost certainly acquired the largest number of staunch fans. Elly Stone, who gave legendary performances in the original production, at the Village Gate, remembers one loyalist who by the time the show ended its five-year run, in 1972, had seen it more than sixty times. And she recalls that the actress Joan Loring used to employ "Brel" as a barometer of friendship. "One old friend of hers didn't like it," Stone says, "and she dissolved the relation."

"Brel" is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary this year, but that doesn't mean there will be anything sentimental about the production that Stone is directing to commemorate the occasion. "My vision is more Brechtian than the original was," she says, arguing that a hard-edged approach helps keep the songs relevant. "Take the song 'Next,' and the famous lyric that begins 'I swear on the wet head of my first case of gonorrhea.' If you sing it not from a point of personal suffering but out of general moral outrage, it becomes a song about powerlessness. And there are always plenty of people around who feel powerless."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

A . . . My Name Is Still Alice—A sequel to the 1984 musical revue "A . . . My Name Is Alice." Conceived and directed by Joan Micklin Silver and Julianne Boyd. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

C. Colombo Inc., Export/Import, Genoa—A performance piece by Leo Bassi. In previews. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

The Destiny of Me—Larry Kramer's new play, which picks up ten years after "The Normal Heart," opens the season for Circle Rep. Peter Frechette, Jonathan Hadary, Oni Faida Lampley, Piper Laurie, Bruce McCarty, John Cameron Mitchell, and David Spielberg are in the cast. Previews through Oct. 18. Opens Oct. 20 at 8. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)—Cherry Jones has the lead in a comedy by Ann-Marie MacDonald. Previews through Oct. 20. Opens Oct. 21 at 7. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris—A revival of the musical put together from the works of M. Brel by Eric Blau and Mort Shuman. Directed by Elly Stone, one of the stars of the original show. Previews through Oct. 18 at 3. Opens Oct. 18 at 7. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

The Madame MacAdam Travelling Theatre—A new comic drama written by Thomas Kilroy and presented by the Irish Repertory Theatre Company. Previews through Oct. 18 at 3. Opens Oct. 18 at 7. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

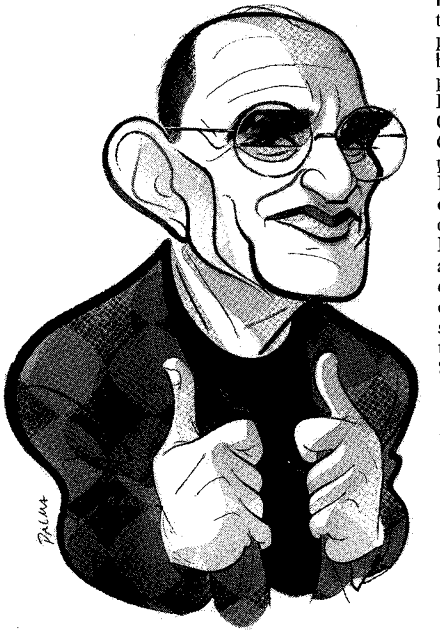
Oleanna—William H. Macy and Rebecca Pidgeon in a new play written and directed by David Mamet. In previews. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100.)

The Show-Off—The Roundabout Theatre Company's production of George Kelly's 1924 comedy, with Pat Carroll, Boyd Gaines, Laura Esterman, and Sophie Hayden. In previews. (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's new play, with Jane Alexander, Madeline Kahn, and Frances McDormand. Daniel Sullivan directed. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Spic-O-Rama—John Leguizamo's latest one-man show. It's the story of the dysfunctional Gigante clan, as seen through the eyes of a precocious nine-year-old. In previews. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

The World of Ruth Draper—Patricia Norcia's annual selection of Ruth Draper monologues. Oct. 18 at 8:30: "Three Women and Mr. Clifford," "In a Church in Italy," and "Four Imaginary Folk Songs." . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 8:30: "A Southern Girl at a Dance," "The Children's Party," "At the Court of Philip IV," and "The Actress." (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. For reservations, call 769-4217.)



Larry Kramer, author of "The Destiny of Me"

OPENED RECENTLY

The Best of Forbidden Broadway—This tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's long-running, ever-fluctuating musical revue is, as one might expect, a treat. There is some new material, but the sharpest sequences are still the spoof of "M. Butterfly" and the "Speed-the-Plow" number, "Madonna's Brain," in which David Mamet and Ron Silver try to teach Madonna to act and she ends up tearing off most of her clothes. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/4/92.) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

Brother Truckers—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company presents a new comedy by Georg Osterman. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

Conversations with My Father—If you're looking for a totally satisfying theatrical experience, try the new Herb Gardner, a bittersweet memory play about a Lower East Side barkeep, his two sons, and the patrons of his tavern. As staged by Daniel Sullivan, with an ace cast led by the wonderful Judd Hirsch, the play does what "Jake's Women" and "Dancing at Lughnasa" would probably do if their authors were, respectively, more sophisticated and less sentimental. Grab this one. (4/13/92) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Crazy for You—Loosely based on "Girl Crazy," which opened in 1930, this glorious show is actually a celebration of the music of George Gershwin and the lyrics of his brother Ira—nineteen songs in all—and also of the witty, imaginative choreography of Susan Stroman. Ken Ludwig wrote the lively book. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson are the lead actor/dancers. Bless 'em all. (3/2/92) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Falsettos—This back-to-back revival of "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland," two of William Finn's three one-act musicals about a childish, self-absorbed man who leaves his wife and son for his not very nice male lover, is strictly for those who care. The appeal of Mr. Finn's trilogy has always been puzzling. It has a chronology as complicated as the Oedipus cycle and a dramatic sensibility akin to that of the Oresteia. But it has always seemed like banality set to music: shallow, unlikable people expressing themselves in shallow, unlikable songs. (5/11/92) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Five Guys Named Moe—The guys are black dancers and singers of ability and spirit, who perform the songs (either lyrics or music or both) of the late Louis Jordan, among them "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," "Ain't Nobody Here but Us Chickens," and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" This London import makes a merry evening. (4/20/92) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Fortinbras—The Signature Theatre Company presents a 1991 comedy by Lee Blessing. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes Nov. 1.)

Guys and Dolls—A lively production of Frank Loesser's perfect musical, under the direction of Jerry Zaks. Nathan Lane and Faith Prince are the leading guy and doll, and Tony Walton designed the stunning scenery. (4/27/92) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Holy Terror—Daniel Gerroll has the lead in a play written and directed by Simon Gray. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Jake's Women—Alan Alda is at his genial best in the new Neil Simon. The play, about an aging writer trying to come to terms with the women in his life, past and present, has some funny lines and a lot of phony dialogue. It's predictable, banal, and contrived, but at least it showcases a fine cast of actresses that includes Kate Burton and Joyce Van Patten. (4/6/92) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. Closes Oct. 25.)

Jelly's Last Jam—The music of Jelly Roll Morton, self-proclaimed inventor of jazz, and, at the same time, an unsparing delineation of Morton himself. The show was written and directed by George C. Wolfe. In the starring role, Gregory Hines combines his astonishing talents as tap dancer and actor; Savi[illegible] Glover plays the character as a young man. Also present are Keith David, Tonya Pinkins, Wayne Mathis, and Mary Bond Davis. (5/11/92) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Mad Forest—Caryl Churchill's 1990 play about post-Ceausescu Romania. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me—A play written and performed by David Drake. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038.)

Oba Oba '93—Seventy-five dancers, singers, and musicians from Brazil. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Remembrance—Set in Belfast, Graham Reid's absorbing and often entertaining play tells

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BILL

the story of a man and a woman—he a Protestant and she a Catholic, and both of them widowed and in their sixties—who meet regularly at a cemetery (each there to mourn a son who was a victim of the current "troubles") and who slowly fall in love. They are both beset by grown children who, in different ways, raise hell. The action is a matter of brief scenes, some of them quite funny. Milo O'Shea and Frances Sternhagen can seldom have been better than they are in the leading roles, and they are ably supported by Mia Dillon, Caroleen Feeney, John Finn, and Terry Donnelly. (10/12/92) (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-9077.)

The Roads to Home—In three short acts that are more triptych than play, Horton Foote depicts three gentlewomen of Houston, all of them thwarted or otherwise wounded, and one of them mad. The third and best act is set in the asylum to which the madwoman has been committed. Jean Stapleton, Rochelle Oliver, and Hallie Foote appear in the leading roles. All of them are good, and they are well supported (theatrically speaking) by Michael Hadge, William Alderson, and Emmett O'Sullivan-Moore, among others. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Ruthless!—This camp musical about a monster child star is harmless and amusing enough—assuming you can stomach the little girl. Sylvia Miles joins the cast through Oct. 18. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

You Could Be Home Now—A one-woman show written by, and starring, Ann Magnuson. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Nov. 1.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)... **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.)... **CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY:** A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)... **DANCING AT LUGHNASA:** How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes Oct. 25.)... **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run celebrated its thirty-second birthday last May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.)... **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)... **LOST IN YONKERS:** This family melodrama by Neil Simon is set in Yonkers during the Second World War. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)... **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)... **MISS SAIGON:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)... **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)... **PERFECT CRIME:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.)... **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)... **THE SECRET GARDEN:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. It's subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)... **TUBES:** A performance work by Blue Man Group about art and other matters. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)... **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

DANCE

Keeping Time

MARTHA GRAHAM made "Panorama" in the summer of 1935, while she was teaching a summer program at Bennington College. It had a three-tiered set, by Arch Lauterer, that featured mobiles by Alexander Calder; a piano score by Norman Lloyd; and a cast of thirty-six dancers, including a group of students who understood almost nothing about her style. The forty-five-minute work, presented in a local armory, was ambitious. The dance formations sprawled over the room, and the choreographic theme was American history from the Puritans to the Depression. That first performance turned out to be the last: "Panorama" got a discouraging review in the *Times* by John Martin, one of Graham's most devoted champions, and has come down to us as an experiment that failed.

Did someone say last performance? This week, "Panorama" is back, at least in excerpts. During the Graham company's current season at City Center, eleven minutes of the original dance will be given a New York première. The reconstruction is being supervised by Yuriko, the indomitable Graham dancer (now seventy-two) who oversaw the persuasive recent stagings of "Heretic," "Steps in the Street," and "Celebration." In this case, she worked from a silent film by Julien Bryan. (Her own memory served as the basis for her contribution to another company reconstruction this season—Graham's solo "Salem Shore.") "I love Martha's work," Yuriko said recently. "I respect her work. I want her work to be alive, but with a now energy." Now energy? "Fast," she said.

Martha Graham Dance Company—Oct. 13 at 7:30: A film of Martha Graham in "Frontier," as well as "Lamentation," the revival premières of "Salem Shore" (1943) and of excerpts from "Panorama" (1935), and "Acts of Light."...¶ Oct. 14 at 8: "Clytemnestra."... ¶ Oct. 15 at 8: "Plain of Prayer," "The Eyes of the Goddess," excerpts from "Panorama," "Naramaya" (company première), "... ing" (première), and "Maple Leaf Rag." ... ¶ Oct. 16-17 at 8: The "Frontier" film, "Lamentation," "Salem Shore," excerpts from "Panorama," "Night Journey," and "Maple Leaf Rag." ... ¶ Oct. 17 at 2: "Plain of Prayer," "Lamentation," "Naramaya," "... ing," excerpts from "Panorama," and "Acts of Light."... ¶ Oct. 18 at 2: "Plain of Prayer," "Salem Shore," "Night Journey," and "Acts of Light."... ¶ Oct. [illegible]8 at 7:30: "Acts of Light," excerpts from "Panorama," "The Eyes of the Goddess," and "Maple Leaf Rag." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company—New works to be performed during the engagement include "Havoc," "Fête," "Last Night on Earth," "Love Defined" (with the Lyon Opera Ballet), and "Aria" (with guest artist Jennifer Gelfand, of the Boston Ballet). The programs are different each day. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800 Oct. 13-16 at 8; Oct. 17 at 2 and 8; Oct. 18 at 2; Oct. 20 at 7:30; and Oct. 21 at 8 Through Oct. 25.)

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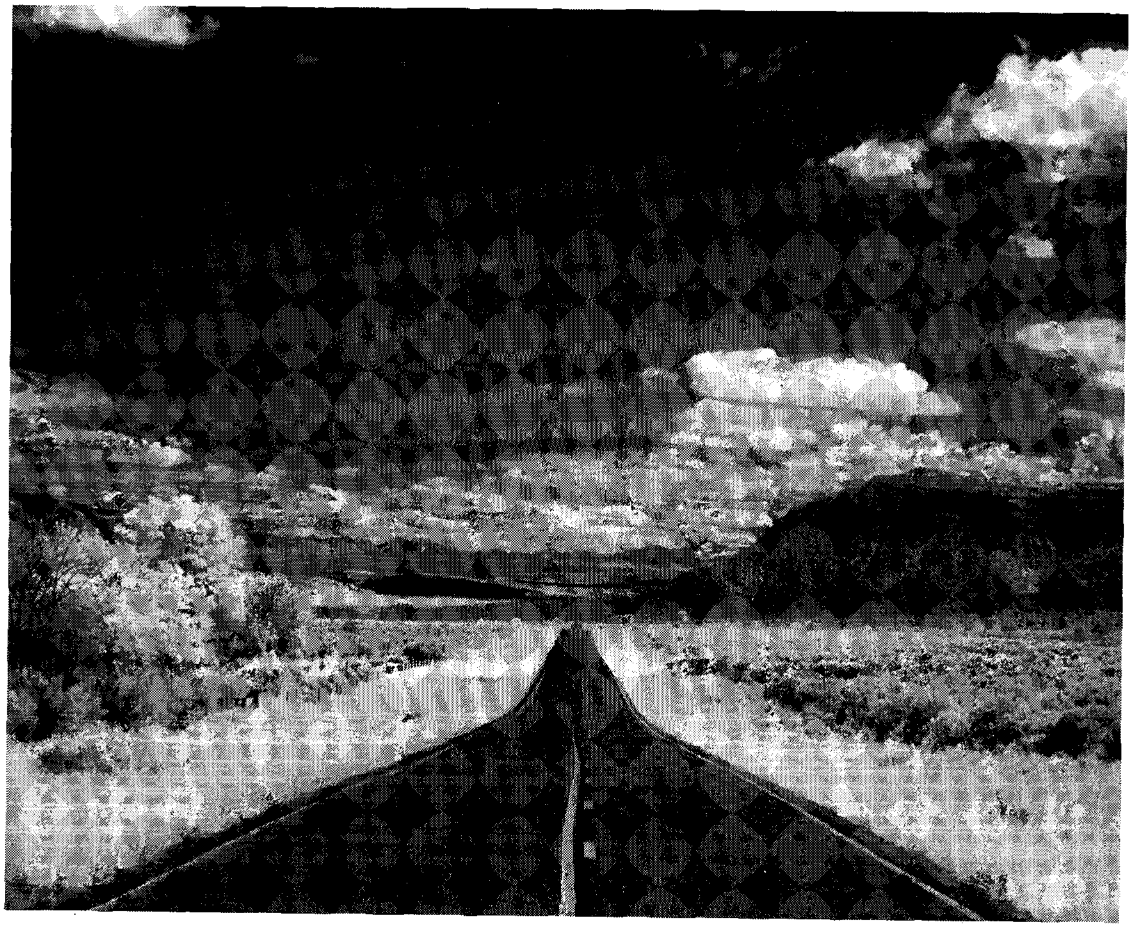

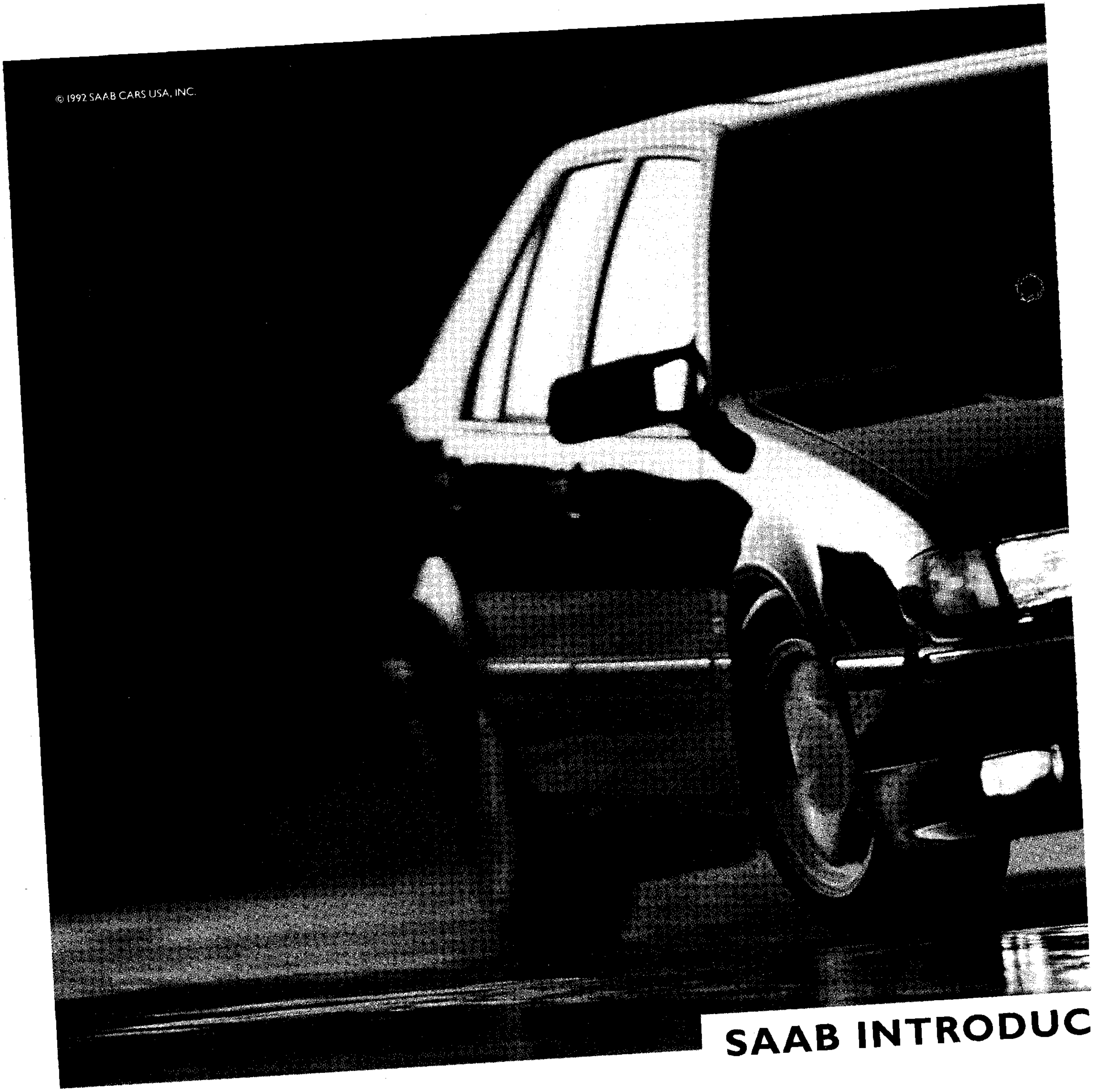

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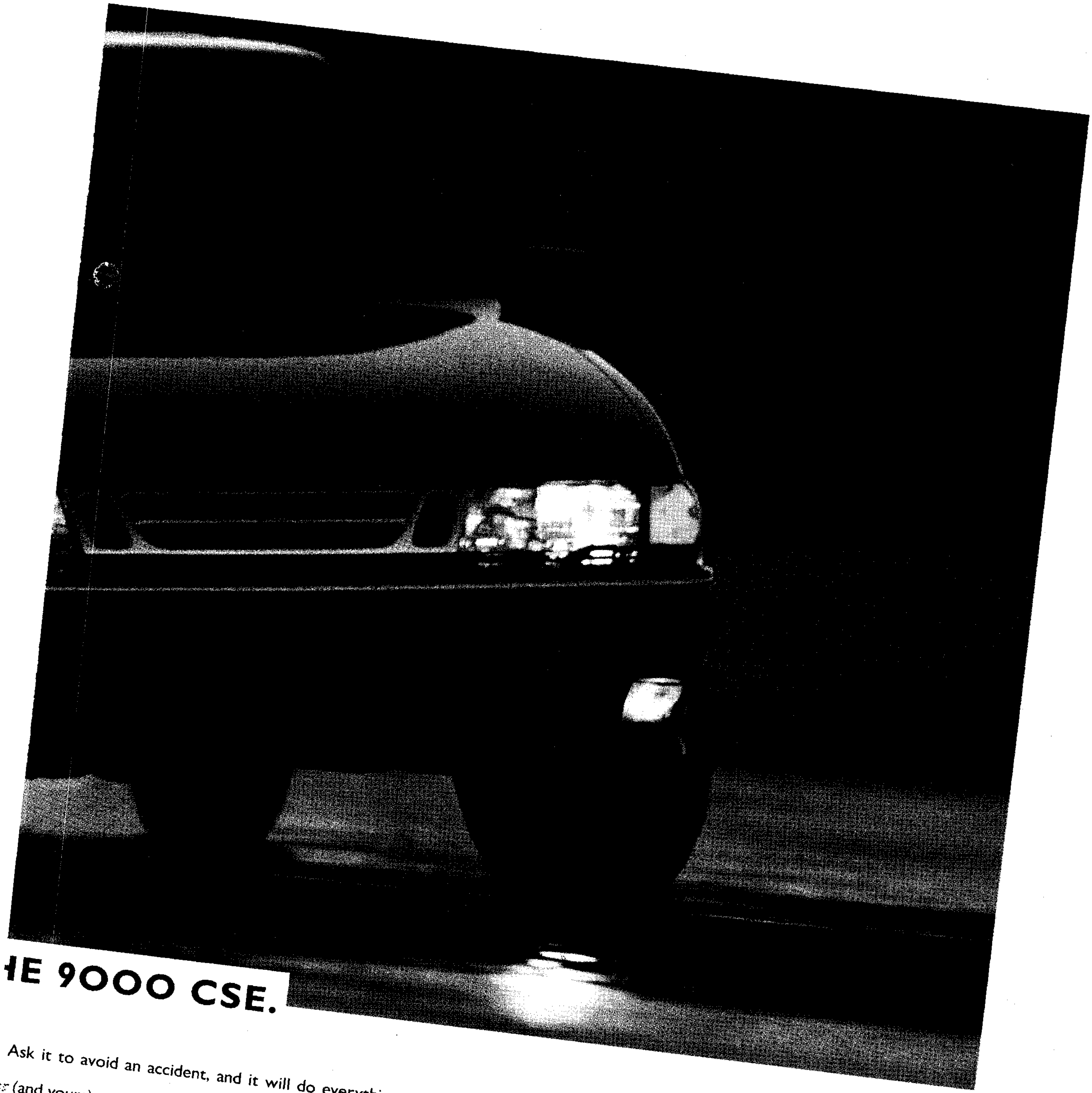

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NIGHT LIFE

Carrying a Torch

"I'VE got this real black-and-white-movie image of New York, and the Algonquin answers that," the singer Andrea Marcovicci said recently. Ms. Marcovicci's past five seasons at the hotel have been such a success that this year the management has crowned her the unofficial Oak Room queen. On October 13, she begins an unprecedented sixteen-week engagement that will consist of six separate shows: two new ones and four from years past. (One of the new shows, "Just Kern," is based on material from an upcoming album.) "I'm sort of throwing myself a retrospective before I'm too dead to enjoy it," she said.

Ms. Marcovicci describes her first run at the Algonquin as her big break in cabaret. Before that, she'd had a long and varied acting career that included a role opposite Woody Allen in "The Front" and a short-lived television series called "Berrenger's." "I come to cabaret from an actress's standpoint," she said. "I've structured a show for myself that's based not on flawless singing but on an expression of the lyric and of what I'm thinking about. . . . It's about words." Words by Sondheim, Kern, and Lorenz Hart are among those that appeal most to Ms. Marcovicci, who is a lively and urbane raconteur. And don't underestimate her vocal powers. For the next few months, she said, "If people really need a fix of torch singing, they'll know where to find me."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**ANDREA MARCOVICCI** begins a long engagement in the Oak Room on Oct. 13. The first few weeks will be devoted to a program titled "Just Kern." Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

ARTHUR'S TAVERN, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—A quirky, endearing Village watering hole, perpetually decorated for the holidays—all of them. The musicians work in the back of the room, in a well ringed by a bar—a setup that seems to bring out the latent show-biz tendencies in some of the bar's patrons. Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy, Fridays and Saturdays to Mabel Godwin, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band. Music from nine-thirty.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room with brass railings and mounted O'Keeffian animal skulls. Look closer and you'll find that the skulls are wearing earrings. After the show, be sure to check out the adjoining restaurant/tapas bar, which looks like the indoor food market of your dreams. Two topflight cabaret artists, **ANNE FRANCINE** and **MARGARET WHITING,** are in the middle of a run here. Ms. Whiting's biggest hit, "A Tree in a Meadow," appeared back in 1948, but her voice doesn't sound much worse for wear since the day Johnny Mercer told her, "You sing like a trumpet." Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine, and Sundays at seven. Closed Mondays.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. The **HILTON RUIZ** quintet is in action Oct. 16-17. Music from nine. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A crowded Village jazz club with an almost equally crowded gift shop upstairs. **NANCY WILSON** is here Oct. 13-18; **REGINA BELLE** begins work on Oct. 20. Music from nine. Dining.

BLUE WILLOW, 644 Broadway, at Bleecker St. (673-6480)—This room is oddly Victorian for lower Broadway, a region almost exc[illegible]sively devoted to youth culture. You won't find any funky murals or drinks with funny names here, just marble walls, antique furnishings, and a ceiling that would be hard to hit with a baseball. It's an agreeable place for conversation, which is probably why the small jazz combos that set up here nightly often get relegated to being background music. Music from seven-thirty Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, airy folk-and-rock club. **ALISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION** perform on Oct. 14. Ms. Krauss, a young fiddler and singer from Champaign, Illinois, has lately been gaining attention in bluegrass and country circles. In the past year, she has sung and played on recordings by Dolly Parton and Michelle Shocked, among others. Her group's last album, "I've Got That Old Feeling," landed on the country charts, and they've just released a new one, "Every Time You Say Goodbye," which features songs by Shawn Colvin, Karla Bonoff, and various band members. **KIRSTY MAC COLL,** who's here Oct. 19-20, is a singer-songwriter who, throughout a diversified career, has been associated with a pantheon of alternative-rock types. Her most recent solo effort, "Electric Landlady," is a remarkable album: the songwriting is mature and forthright, the lyrics are provocative, and the range of styles—everything from country to rap to Irish folk—is almost breathtaking. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Next door, there's a bustling, garishly lit market. Within the narrow walls of this venerable piano-and-bass preserve, however, everything is easy on the eyes and ears. **BENNY GREEN** and **BEN WOLFE** work out through Oct. 17; **CYRUS CHESTNUT** and **KENNY DAVIS** claim the week beginning on Oct. 19. Music from ten. Dining.

CAFÉ SIN-É, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—Don't be misled by the sleepy, hole-in-the-wall atmosphere of this bohemian little Irish café, or by the fact that the place has no stage and no music schedule. While patrons have been writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over their Rolling Rocks, some pretty fine musicians have been known to turn up and tune up: Sinéad O'Connor, Marianne Faithfull, and Luka Bloom, to name a heady few. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (74[illegible] 1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as [illegible] Café Carlyle is home to **BARBARA COOK** Tuesdays through Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, singer-pianist **BARBARA CARROLL** holds forth. Carroll's sets, which are usually equal parts jazz and cabaret, include songs by Gershwin, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Dizzy Gillespie, and Billy Strayhorn, along with some of her own. Sets from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club—a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti—is part sacred burial ground and part historic land-mark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to pass through nightly. **JULIANA HATFIELD** comes in on Oct. 16. Not long ago, Hatfield was leading the Blake Babies, a young Boston group that played alternative rock with a human face. Hatfield's first solo outing, "Hey Babe," is a rare record. Though it doesn't aim to please anyone, it should manage to please everyone—alternative-guitar-rock fans who insist that music should be scrappy and visceral, as well as pop fans who demand a hook. Hatfield has an impossibly girlish voice, and she knows it. Sometimes she subverts her tiny soprano with prickly lyrics and tough, rhythmic instrumentation, and sometimes she pushes it to its pure-pop extreme with lush and sunny harmonies. Those harmonies are missing from Hatfield's concerts, unfortunately. In general, the singer's live sets are good but not great. She's far more focussed on record than she is onstage. Music from eight on Sundays and Mondays, from eight-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

CLUB 53, Sixth Ave. at 53rd St. (261-5853)—A new cabaret in the New York Hilton. It's a pleasantly lulling spot, where you can sink into deep sofas and eat off of big plates. Anyone working on a Judy Garland impersonation might want to check out **JIM BAILEY,** who makes a living from his, as well as from such other portrayals as Madonna, Marilyn, and Peggy Lee (who performed here recently). Starting on Oct. 20, Mr. Bailey exchanges the Garland wig for the Barbra Streisand model. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at eight-forty-five, Fridays and Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—Perhaps because of its out-of-the-loop location, Condon's is one of the city's more low-key jazz clubs, a place where the seating arrangement doesn't seem intended as some kind of punishment. Music at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Sundays, with late sets at one on Fridays and Saturdays.

CONTINENTAL CLUB, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St.—The Swing Dance Society holds Sunday-night meetings at this Polish meeting hall, which probably hasn't had a facelift since the swing era. (Until recently, it was known as Irving Plaza.) The dancers span all ages and shoe sizes, but all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. **BILL CONWAY & THE SWING EXPRESS** have the stage on Oct. 18. Sets from eight till midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. **ABBEY LINCOLN,** an assured and skillful vocalist, is in swing Oct. 13-18. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, a menu full of items like bangers and mash, and a piano. Knickerbocker is an airy, good-spirited place and, while music often takes a back seat to conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly, sometimes with a colleague in tow. Music from nine-forty-five.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—The club most likely to feature an electric-rake player. Run by a couple of forward-looking Wisconsinites, the Knitting Factory takes in all manner of neo-this and post-that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key bohemian—it's like a frat house for the avant-garde. **PETIT UBU,** a group that features David Thomas, the lead singer of the veteran postpunk band Pere Ubu, performs Oct. 16-17. Music after nine.

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A two-tiered honky-tonk that looks as if it were the inspiration for the Hard Rock Café. Oct. 16-17 belongs to **JONATHAN RICHMAN.** With the Modern Lovers in the late seventies, Richman produced some of pop's most whimsical songs. Since then, he's had his ups and downs, but his latest release, "I, Jonathan," finds him in good form. The record, which sounds as if it were recorded in his basement, is an unaffected come-as-you-are party that includes a surf tune, a "Louie Louie" knockoff, a Velvet Underground tribute, and a song about dancing in a lesbian bar. Musically, it's familiar Richman territory, but the singer-songwriter's wit is in abundant supply. Music after nine.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A bright spot on the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. Singer-guitarist **JOHNNY (CLYDE) COPELAND** is here on Oct. 15. Sets from nine-fifteen, except Sundays, when they begin at eight-forty-five.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club, just off the West Side Highway, that is one of the city's main venues for college-radio fare. **SCREAMING TREES,** who perform on Oct. 15, are sometimes lumped in with the Seattle scene, though they're actually from nearby Ellensburg, Washington. The group subscribes to a louder-is-better ethic, with an emphasis on acid-rock guitars. But though they specialize in the headlong stomp, their music can also be quite melodic and ear-catching. The group's sophomore big-label album, "Sweet Oblivion," has just been released, and they contributed a song to the much-touted "Singles" soundtrack.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. The **CHILLS,** who appear on Oct. 15, is a New Zealand band that writes silly love songs that, upon closer inspection, aren't always so silly. Their sound, awash in keyboards and pleasing harmonies, is airy and well-meaning, and they have a flair for pop melodies, but their lyrics are seldom sentimental. Oct. 16 belongs to **BEAT HAPPENING,** an Olympia, Washington, trio that, for nearly a decade, has been lurking in the shadows of the music industry, quietly producing a stream of modest, affable, ingenious pop. Shows are usually at ten on Thursdays, at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays, and at nine other nights.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—**VERNEL BAGNERIS,** the creator of the musicals "One Mo' Time" and "Staggerlee," is currently offering a one-man tribute to Jelly Roll Morton. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen.

Jonathan Richman at the Lone Star Roadhouse

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where fake jewels glitter on the tables and where a club soda costs, well, a *lot.* Singer **MAUREEN MC GOVERN,** who's here for the next couple of weeks, was once known (to her consternation) as "the disaster-theme queen"—she sang "The Morning After," from "The Poseidon Adventure," as well as songs from "The Towering Inferno." Since then, Ms. McGovern, who has a powerful, versatile set of pipes and a four-octave range, has successfully refashioned herself in a cabaret mode. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steak house, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Jazz Society, Tuesdays and Fridays to **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS,** Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. The Wednesday lineup is always changing. On Oct. 21 you can catch the Sonny Daniels big band. Show times vary.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small, red-gold-and-green cabaret, where **SKITCH HENDERSON** performs on Oct. 18. Shows Sundays at eight and ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A pretty serious jazz shrine where, to reach the restrooms, you have to pass within inches of the stage. This is significant because, if you head to the bathroom during a set, the crowd is likely to think you're a guest soloist. A trio led by **MC COY TYNER** is here through Oct. 18. Tyner puts on extraordinary shows, which alternate seamlessly from the thunderous and showy to the lyrical and understated. **AVERY SHARPE** and **AARON SCOTT** are his accomplished bandmates. **NAT ADDERLEY'S** quintet gets started on Oct. 20. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. **PHAROAH SANDERS'** quartet is here Oct. 13-18, and the **GERI ALLEN** trio descends the stairs on Oct. 20. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Home of an endless Summer of Love, Wetlands is a groovy, psychedelic, thoroughly Green night club. It is filled more or less nightly with young bands who like to play long, swirling jams to throngs of young Deadheads. The **NEIGHBORHOODS,** a long-suffering but talented Boston pop trio, will be appearing on Oct. 14. **CHUCKLEHEAD** and **BOP HARVEY** share a bill on Oct. 16. Music from ten.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

The tall, ever so skinny young man strode through Disco 2000 negotiating spike heels as easily as he'd smeared on his lipstick. Rave dancers crashed into him through the club's fog, one of them reaching out to twirl her finger through the *guiche* on his forehead. But he moved on undaunted, swinging his arms so that his short tattered crinoline swayed to the beat of the club's music. "Where *are* they? I can never find anyone in this place," he bitched. He was hit in the head with plastic cups to[illegible]d by his two women friends—one a dead ringer for Rita Tushingham in "Smashing Time," the other a rather ordinary-looking girl with bracelet tattoos. After he crushed the cups and threw them in the air, the trio took in the scene: Ren-and-Stimpy drags; a Flash Gordon with a plastic spiked belt; and a duo in white panne, quilted hair, and Stevie Nicks castoffs. The three of them slouched off to bum cigarettes.

If Disco 2000 (Wednesdays at Limelight) is "Blade Runner," the Thursday opening of Webster Hall was Fellini's "City of Women" done as a musical. Yet it's odd how the latter's deliberate coziness seems fresh, while the former's multidimensional jaggedness now feels stale. No sooner had the signature Latin frenzy of the d.j. Perfidia sounded at Webster Hall than the skinny young man from the previous evening appeared in a red tartan pinafore with a wired two-foot bustle bow. He went flying toward the main room, not realizing that its doors opened inward. He was helped to his feet by two gentlemen nearby, after which he marvelled at their *courtoisie.* He thanked their girlfriends as well, then confessed, "You'll have to forgive me. I'm not used to dressing in formal wear."

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

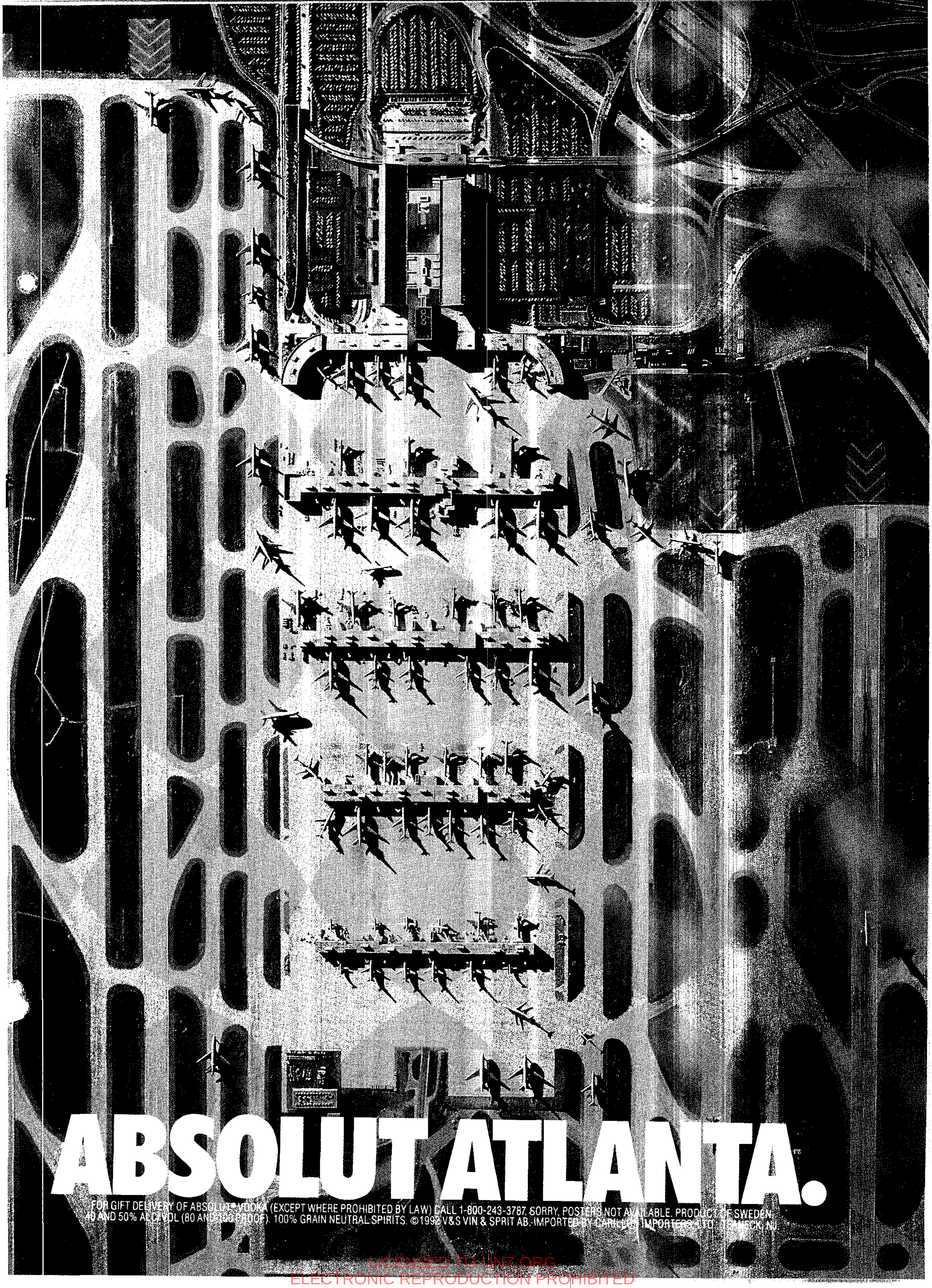
Next Wave Festival—Oct. 14 at 7, Oct. 15-16 and Oct. 20-21 at 8, and Oct. 17 at 2 and 8: "Frida," a performance, with music and puppets, about the life of Frida Kahlo. Starring Helen Schneider. Through Oct. 25. . . . ¶ Oct. 15-17 at 8: Robert Mirabal and Pura Fe, a Native American vocal duo, perform "Native Voices: Music of the Pueblo, Songs of the City." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. The festival continues through Dec. 27.)

"Hissing and Kissing the Wind"—An exhibition of videos and props from past performan[illegible] by the Residents. (The Kitchen, 512 [illegible] 19th St. 255-5793. Starts Oct. 15. O[illegible]h Mondays through Fridays, noon to 6.)

"The Emperor Jones"—The Wooster Group presents work-in-progress performances of Eugene O'Neill's play. Directed by Elizabeth LeCompte; with Willem Dafoe, Peyton Smith, and Kate Valk. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Oct. 15-17 at 8.)

Penny Arcade—In "Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!" With the works: go-go dancers, nudity, explicit language, and pornographic images. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 982-9292. Fridays and Saturdays at 8.)

P.S. 122—Oct. 15-18 at 9: Linda Austin in two performances that entail dancing and vocalizing. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)



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ART

Extra! Extra!

In Robert Gober's new installation, at Dia Center for the Arts (548 West 22nd Street), what appear to be stacks of New York newspapers lie about a brightly lit, two-thousand-square-foot Sheetrock enclosure within the building's darkened third-floor space. It's a sort of pastoral prison chamber, from which one can glimpse bits of trompe-l'oeil sky through high, barred windows. The room's four walls have been painstakingly and quite realistically painted to create the illusion of a forest full of paths. Along the two long walls of this institutional grotto eight sinks with running taps produce a waterfall sound: they're a fountain. Below four of the sinks lurk boxes labelled "Rat Bait."

Like a wolfish and worldly priest, Gober assuages us, the better to spring his traps. Subversive sight gags and sly patterns emerge from the piles of papers. An image of the artist dressed as a bride recurs. Obituary pages, full of untimely notices, figure prominently. This piece, in fact, suggests Sartre's "No Exit": this strange penal paradise is made up of disparate, irreconcilable woes. Gober's sensibility is caustic through and through—white-hot and wry. He ties political knots into theological tangles, and singes all the loose ends, leaving everything as open to doubt—or is it faith?—as the Immaculate Conception.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—*Ceci n'est pas une rétrospective*: The Magritte bash includes more than a hundred and fifty paintings, drawings, bronzes, and other objects. Through Nov. 22. . . . ¶ The third-century works in "Loma Negra, A Peruvian Lord's Tomb" range from small gilt nose and ear ornaments to large headdresses and masks. . . . ¶ Portraits—and self-portraits—by Thomas Eakins, Mary Cassatt, Winslow Homer, and other American artists. Through Jan. 17. . . . ¶ A retrospective of paintings, drawings, and prints by the Spanish realist Jusepe de Ribera (1591-1652). Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ Color photographs by Leo Rubinfien, taken in Japan, China, and Southeast Asia. Through Jan. 3. . . . **note:** The museum's roof garden, planted with eight sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. Through Nov. 1. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Henri Matisse." The long-awaited retrospective has been installed on the second and third floors. Through Jan. 12. (Plan wisely; call 708-9850 for ticket information. Tickets can be purchased in advance, and a limited number of same-day tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis.). . . ¶ A hundred and twenty-five books, by such artists as Giorgio de Chirico, Lucio Fontana, Francesco Clemente, and Giacomo Manzù, are on view in "The Artist and the Book in Twentieth-Century Italy." Starts Oct. 14. . . . ¶ "The Photographs of Lucas Samaras" comprises thirty works from his many series of Polaroids. Through Dec. 1. . . . ¶ Two series of color and black-and-white photographs by Suzanne Lafont. Through Nov. 15. (Museum hours through Jan. 12: open daily, except Wednesdays, 10:30 to 6; Wednesdays, 12 to 6; Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915-32" is an exhibition of eight hundred paintings, sculptures, photographs, and architectural, graphic, and stage designs. Through Dec. 15. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—"Marc Chagall and the Jewish Theater." Seven murals on canvas (recently restored) that the artist made in 1920 for the State Jewish Kamerny Theatre, in Moscow. Through Jan. 17. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings until 10.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The work of Alfonso Ossorio (1916-90), an American Surrealist of Hispanic-Filipino-Chinese descent, has never been taken very seriously. He has sometimes been thought of as a summer-stock Dali. At other times, because of his well-known friendships within the world of Abstract Expressionism, he has been viewed as a rear wheel on the Pollock-Krasner cart. This show of rarely seen drawings from the forties is thus a revelation. There are a couple of anatomical drawings, intended for medical use, that Ossorio made while stationed with the Army at Camp Ellis, Illinois, and even these are abnormally lurid. They are only a clue, however, to the unimpeded Blakean visions yet to come—hellish images of parasites and scavengers, concupiscent mermaids and ballerinas. The show establishes Ossorio as a red-hot link between, say, Albrecht Dürer and the current California style of heavy-metal parochial-school artists. Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ "Homecoming: William H. Johnson and Afro-America, 1938-46." Through Oct. 25. . . . ¶ An auxiliary exhibition, "Parallel Visions," draws on the museum's permanent collection to provide a context for viewing the works of Johnson. Among the artists represented here are Philip Evergood, Edward Hopper, Jacob Lawrence, Ben Shahn, and Alice Trumbull Mason. Through Oct. 25. . . ¶ A large exhibition of twentieth-century figurative paintings and sculptures from the collection. Through Nov. 29. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Meg Webster's installation, titled "Running," consists of a stream of water and an adjacent resource room with a computer and books on ecology. Through Jan. 3. . . . ¶ "Fantasy Furniture" is a collection of wacky nineteenth-century pieces from around the world. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Cultures at Crossroads: Southeast Asian Textiles from the Australian National Gallery." Seventy-nine objects, dating from the seventeenth century to the early twentieth, from Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, India, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Through Jan. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

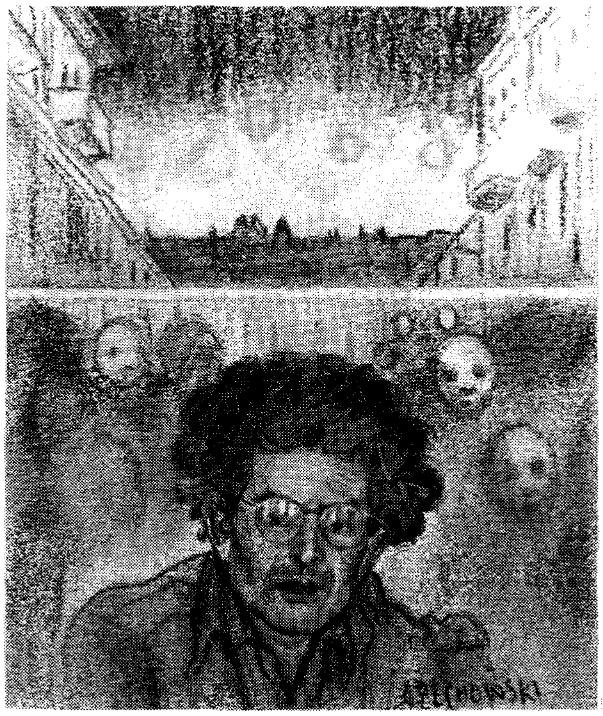
Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"The Power of Maps." Navigating your way through this huge show of more than four hundred maps (the earliest is from 1500 B.C.) could prove a daunting task. But be adventurous, and you'll find Native American star charts, Italian globes, Aboriginal "Dreaming" maps, survey maps of the Pyramids, and much more. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St.—A new installation by Robert Gober. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—A new permanent installation of blue-and-white Chinese porcelain from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth is on view in the reception hall. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain." The perfect followup to the recent "Al-Andalus" show at the Met. More than a hundred manuscripts, textiles, ceramics, and architectural fragments are on view. Through Dec. 20. (Open Tuesdays, except Oct. 13 and Oct. 20, Wednesdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, 11 to 8; Fridays, 11 to 3.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—"Fragile Ecologies" presents several artists' interpretations of—and suggested solutions for—various problems in the biosphere. Among those represented are Mel Chin, Alan Sonfist, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Helen and Newton Harrison, and a group of California high-school students. Through Nov. 29. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)



Irving Petlin

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Irving Petlin—Twenty-five recent works on paper, a few having Biblical themes but most of them inspired by Bruno Schulz's memory novel, "The Street of Crocodiles." Though Petlin is a very literary pictorialist, he uses pastels as fluently as any artist since Redon. Here, pastels become a metaphor for time itself. Imperfectly recollected streets, for instance, as well as half-remembered faces and events set in Warsaw long ago, are dissolved or fudged impressionistically. In "The Night of the Great Season" and "Spring (Bianca)," two of the best pieces in the show, figures seem to be entering some immaterial realm. Through Oct. 20. (Kent, 47 E. 63rd St. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays.)

Short List—**STEPHEN DE STAEBLER**, CDS Gallery, 76 E. 79th St. (open Sundays, noon to 3, through Nov. 21); **JOHN HOYLAND**, Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through Nov. 8); **WIFREDO LAM**, Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. (opens daily, except Mondays, at noon; through Dec. 20); **HENRI MATISSE**, La Boetie, 9 E. 82nd St. (through Oct. 31); **LARRY POONS** and **MARSDEN HARTLEY**, Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (through Oct. 31); **FAIRFIELD PORTER**, Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through Oct. 31); **FRANK STELLA**, Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Nov. 12).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Federico Castellon (1914-71)—An exhibition of small Surrealist figure paintings from the thirties that are witty and entertaining but so pouffy that they seem in danger of floating away. Through Oct. 31. (Rosenfeld, 50 W. 57th St.)

Isa Genzken—Although the coldness of Genzken's industrial work makes it difficult to actually like, her pieces effectively evoke an urban wasteland. Most of the work is marked by a weird relationship to functionality—she produces lean door frames and other architectural fragments out of such raw materials as concrete, resin, and steel structural rods. Also in this show are a number of more cerebral pieces—small plaster works and some photographs—that honor the impermanent aesthetics of the maquette in a lasting sculptural form. Through Oct. 17. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Claes Oldenburg—With most of the new sculptures on view here, the leading Pop sculptor has returned to the luscious, drippy AbEx surfaces of his early art. The result is often work of considerable animation and spirit. A bridge in the form of a clarinet is sleek and sassy, while a group of perfume bottles emitting clouds of mist are unnerving. The various drawings and watercolors here show how the artist employs his inimitable sense of gesture to reinvent form and content. Through Oct. 17. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Milton Resnick—This show of recent paintings carries some major news: Resnick, the last of the great fugue-abstractionists, has embraced the figure! Well, not exactly embraced. These carnivalesque figure groups and Edenic pairs seem to have been exuded by the paint itself. Resnick is a virtuoso with the color green, and these small works feature delicate outcroppings of shades like pea, moss, and olive. Through Oct. 17. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Michael Tetherow—Two excellent exhibitions of works on paper by an underestimated contemporary master of the exquisite and hypersensitive line. Tetherow's witty, weblike, semi-figurative drawings are as good as the best of Arshile Gorky and Henri Michaux. Both shows through Oct. 17. (Jason McCoy, 41 E. 57th St., and Judith Goldberg, 52 E. 76th St.)

Short List—**DANIEL BARRETT**, ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 31); **VANESSA BELL**, Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (through Nov. 7); **KATHERINE BOWLING**, Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 7); **RICHARD CROZIER**, Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 28); **JUDITH GODWIN**, Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 17); **MORRIS GRAVES**, Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (opens Saturdays at noon, through Oct. 24); **AL HELD**, Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 7); **PAUL HUNTER**, De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 31); **KÄTHE KOLLWITZ**, Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 7); **JANE LAUDI**, Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 7); **JAMES LECHAY**, Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Nov. 7); **WENDY MARK**, Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Oct. 17); **HENRY MOORE**, Heidenberg, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 24); **CAROLYN PLOCHMANN**, Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 31); **WALLACE PUTNAM**, Ross, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 17); **ABRAHAM WALKOWITZ**, Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St., and Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (both shows through Oct. 17); **GEORGE WEXLER**, Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 24).

GALLERIES—SoHo

David Bowes—Picking up where Dufy left off, as it were, Bowes makes charming, skillful, decorative paintings that flaunt rococo fripperies as if they represented some unpopular political position—and maybe they do. The new paintings, especially the gestural park scenes that look as if they've been papered in poodles, demonstrate what can be achieved when a froufrou infantilism has matured. Through Oct. 31. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Scott Burton (1939-89) / **Byron Kim**—In the early eighties, Burton's career as an artist who designed sculptural furniture really took off. On view here is his series of eight pairs of concrete tables. The work combines the kind of logic popular among post-minimalists with a love of fine design. Also included is documentation of the artist's first public work, a massive round concrete table that represents the ultimate in democratic utilitarianism. /Reinhardtesque cruciform paintings in multiple skin tones, and a series of portraits done in facial makeup custom-blended to approximate the colors of various friends' faces. These are portraits for the Rainbow Coalition. Both shows through Oct. 17. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Francesco Clemente—These spirited watercolors, made in India and Jamaica, are darker, sadder, and more detached than Clemente's work of the late seventies and early eighties, but his phantasmagoric inventiveness has not deserted him: there is no lack of leaping dancers, contortionists, bestraddled phalluses, and leafy landscapes. Through Oct. 31. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Carlo Ferraris—This artist has worked hard to make his clever, deliberately childlike works look simple. A wood sculpture that should give a sense of weight and stability instead looks as if it's about to float away; it's tethered to the floor by a single piece of string. There is also a fluffy bed of papers seemingly balanced atop a metal pot. These are simple, joyful works, which sharply contrast with the tension-ridden work in most of the shows around town. Through Oct. 31. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

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Robert Irwin—This master dematerialist is exhibiting in New York for the first time since 1987. The installation here consists of three scrims that divide the gallery space in two and that are lit from above with several colored fluorescent lights. Light shines through the semi-transparent surfaces and bounces off the opaque ones, creating a procession of blurred spaces at once sculptural and pictorial. Each scrim is inscribed with a rectangle, and thus the piece is also a shifting study in framing. Although it is very good, it is somewhat overproduced—which wouldn't really matter if an Irwin in New York weren't such a rare occurrence. Through Oct. 17. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

Ilya Kabakov—Kabakov, born in 1933, was for many years among the U.S.S.R.'s most celebrated "unofficial" artists. He first visited the West in 1987, and had his first American show at this gallery in 1988. For this show, the gallery's two large rooms have been transformed into duplicates of salons in the once grand, long-neglected—and entirely fictitious—Barnaul Art Museum. The works on view are by "S. Y. Kochelev," whose oeuvre—in a painterly style that coincided quite remarkably with French Post-Impressionism—was concocted by Kabakov. Through Oct. 17. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Henri Michaux (1899-1984)—This poet and long-time mescaline user painted and drew all sorts of crawly things. A selection of them from his last decade is on view here. Through Oct. 17. (Nolan, 560 Broadway.)

Richard Tuttle—This is the best New York show in years by the Zen master of art. The current works—little objects, drawings, and assemblages mounted at the base of wirelike pencil lines drawn on the walls—are playful, thoughtful, and eccentric. The work's preciousness is both its strength and its downfall. Through Oct. 31. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Meyer Vaisman—The most entertaining and severe expression of excess currently in town. The artist has stuffed and mounted large turkeys and primped and clothed them to resemble such figures as Marie Antoinette, Cousin It, and a drag queen straight from Wigstock. Through Oct. 17. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

"Angels & Franciscans"—A show of models, drawings, and prints by a dozen youngish California architects who have been influenced by Frank Gehry and cyberpunk. Some of the work is pretty silly—furniture derived from Giotto's frescoes, for example—and much of it is sophomoric; an intelligent architect like Thom Mayne is not shown to best advantage here. But some work is excellent. Eric Owen Moss's cyclopean house, which resembles a rounded Rubik's cube, is especially engaging, as is Lubowicki Lanier's model for a Pop residential addition. Through Nov. 7. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.)

Short List—**jennifer bartlett,** Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through Oct. 31); **peter h. begley,** Clasen, 470 Broome St. (through Nov. 28); **stephen ellis,** Koury, 89 Greene St. (through Nov. 14); **lawrence gipe,** Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St. (through Nov. 21); **duane hanson,** Helander, 415 West Broadway (through Nov. 2); **candida höfer,** Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St. (through Oct. 31); **felix stephan huber,** Good, 532 Broadway (through Nov. 7); **mark innerst,** Marcus, 578 Broadway (through Oct. 31); **ellen kozak,** 55 Mercer Street Gallery (through Oct. 17); **diane love,** Phoenix, 568 Broadway (through Oct. 24); **joel otterson,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. (through Nov. 7); **alexis rockman,** Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St. (through Nov. 28); **kenny scharf,** Shafrazi, 130 Prince St. (through Oct. 24); **rosalind schneider,** SoHo 20, 469 Broome St. (through Oct. 24); **peter schuyff,** Kasmin, 74 Grand St. (through Oct. 24); **jim shaw,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through Nov. 7); **joan snyder,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 31); **thomas trosch,** Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through Oct. 31); **robert williams,** Cutler, 379 West Broadway (through Nov. 21).

PHOTOGRAPHY

Food for Thought

If you grab a bite to eat before going to see Sandy Skoglund's latest show, at Janet Borden's gallery (560 Broadway; through October 31), you may want to walk around the block a few times before going in. As Borden, whose dead-on humor makes her the Bette Midler of gallery owners, says, "Skoglund is second only to Martha Stewart in her use of the hot-glue gun." The three pieces here are typical Skoglund: photographs with complementary installations that involve an over-the-top combination of sculpture, mannequins, and glued-on elements. The results are both spooky and hilarious.

The main ingredients in the three works are smoked bacon strips, Cheez Doodles, and raisins, but you have to see what Skoglund does with this stuff to know just how intrinsic it is to her scenes of funny horror. The Cheez Doodle piece, for instance, a takeoff on cocktail parties, may look as if its squiggly contents came straight out of a bag, but Skoglund's sense of perfectionism has led her to paint the snacks Cheez Doodle orange, so that the color of the environment remains bright—just as it is in the corresponding photograph. In each work, the interplay between the photos, which depict real people, and the environments, which employ mannequins, is what gives Skoglund's art its final decorator-gone-haywire touch.

Anne Hall—Photographs of sixty-three artists from *The New Yorker*, including Charles Addams, Roz Chast, George Booth, Ed Koren, and Gretchen Dow Simpson. Through Nov. 27. (Sea Cliff gallery, 310 Sea Cliff Ave., Sea Cliff, New York. Open Sundays.)

William Klein—A retrospective of work by this gutsy and influential practitioner. Photos from Klein's exciting books from the late fifties and early sixties, on New York, Rome, Moscow, and Tokyo, are here, along with some of the most on-target fashion photographs of our time, eighties color photographs of people lazing on European beaches, and large blowups of contact sheets from the past few years. Through Oct. 24. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

Short List—**geoffrey biddle,** Perry, 472 Broome St. (through Oct. 24); **harry callahan,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 24); **john coplans,** Rosen, 130 Prince St. (through Oct. 17); **nancy crampton,** La Maison Française, New York University, 16 Washington Mews (through Oct. 31); **lynn davis,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 31); **ralph eugene meatyard,** 292 Gallery, 120 Wooster St. (through Oct. 24); **duane michals** and **lois greenfiield,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; both shows through Nov. 8); **sarah moon,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through Oct. 24); **mario cravo neto,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through Oct. 24); **izhar patkin** and **nam june paik,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Nov. 21); **charles schenk,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through Oct. 24); **victor skrebneski,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 24); **aaron siskind,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. (through Nov. 21), and Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 24); **karl struss,** Drake, 50 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 7).

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MUSIC

Living Coloratura

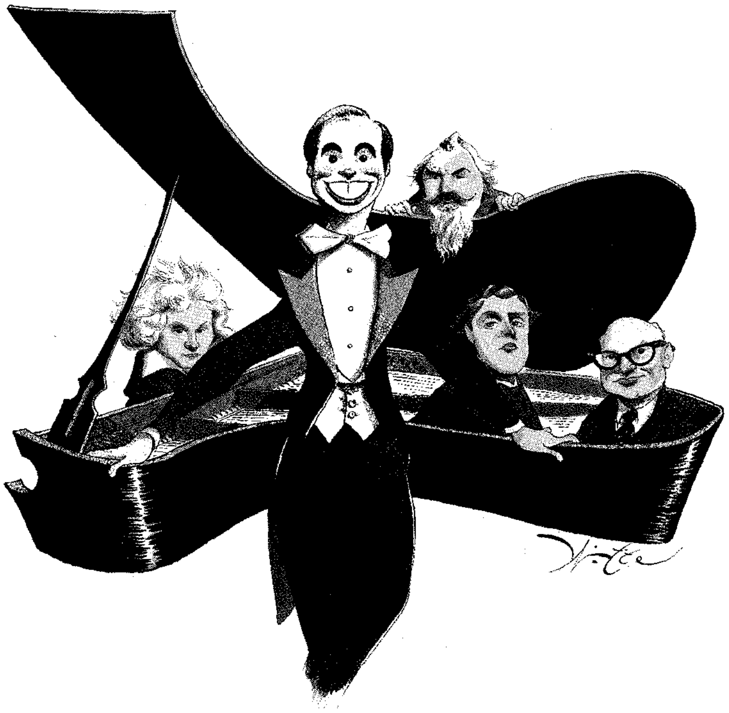
With so few truly interesting opera singers around, New York can't afford to miss Cecilia Gasdia. But there is every possibility that—because of misjudgments and mishaps surrounding her first two visits—we might. Her assets are a temperament that can smolder through long scenes and then ignite in a flash; poise and accuracy in the webs of coloratura that run through Romantic Italian opera; firm, true tone in a melodic line; incisive, just declamation in her native Italian; and an abundantly expressive face. One of her limitations is obvious: her highest notes are not very good. A subtler flaw is that the tenderness and eloquent passivity characterizing so many operatic heroines do not elicit her most imaginative responses. Ms. Gasdia is better when spirited.

And she is probably best of all in the serious operas of Rossini, which we don't see very often in New York. What has she sung here? Gilda in "Rigoletto," at Carnegie Hall, Juliette in Gounod's "Romeo," at the Met: lots of tenderness, lots of high notes. The "Rigoletto" was hampered by the tight, intimidating conducting of Riccardo Muti, and the Met run by the singer's ill health. Let's hope she gets a third chance, because on her own territory Ms. Gasdia can be thrilling. While we're waiting, a glimpse of the singer can be caught on October 20 at Alice Tully Hall, where she will sing Azio Corghi's arrangements—for voice, flute, and strings—of some songs Rossini wrote in old age. Still not her home territory, but maybe diverting.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St., 854-7799.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—THE VOYAGE, a Columbus-inspired operatic epic by Philip Glass, in its world première, with a cast that includes Patricia Schuman, Tatiana Troyanos, Douglas Perry, Timothy Noble, Kaaren Erickson, Jane Shaulis, Julien Robbins, and Jan Opalach; conducted by Bruce Ferden. (Oct. 12 and Oct. 16 at 8.)... With Patricia Schuman, Tatiana Troyanos, Philip Creech, Brian Montgomery, Kaaren Erickson, Jane Shaulis, Julien Robbins, and Jan Opalach; Bruce Ferden. (Oct. 21 at 8.)... **MADAMA BUTTERFLY,** with Yoko Watanabe, Yun Deng, Michael Sylvester, and Dwayne Croft; Julius Rudel. (Oct. 13 at 8.)... With Yoko Watanabe, Wendy White, Michael Sylvester, and Juan Pons; Julius Rudel. (Oct. 17 at 1:30.)... **FALSTAFF,** with Mirella Freni, Heidi Grant Murphy, Marilyn Horne, Paul Plishka, Stanford Olsen, and Bruno Pola; James Levine. (Oct. 14 at 8.)... With Mirella Freni, Barbara Bonney, Marilyn Horne, Paul Plishka, Stanford Olsen, and Bruno Pola; James Levine. (Oct. 17 and Oct. 20 at 8.)... **UN BALLO IN MASCHERA,** with Aprile Millo, Heidi Grant Murphy, Ludmila Schemtchuk, Richard Leech, and Juan Pons; John Fiore. (Oct 15 at 8.)... **TOSCA,** with Ghena Dimitrova, Luciano Pavarotti, and Alain Fondary; Christian Badea. (Oct. 19 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)



Robert Taub

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—THE DESERT SONG, with Michele McBride, Lillian Graff, Louise Hickey, Richard White, Philip Wm. McKinley, Robert Tate, and Cris Groenendaal; conducted by Chris Nance. (Oct. 13 and Oct. 16 at 8.)... **DIE FLEDERMAUS,** sung in English, with Cynthia Lawrence, Cecelia Wasson, Robert Brubaker, and Robert Orth; Mark Gibson. (Oct. 15 and Oct. 21 at 8.)... **CARMEN,** with Robynne Redmon, Christiane Riel, Antonio Barasorda, and Harry Dworchak; Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Oct. 17 at 1:30.)... **THE MAGIC FLUTE,** sung in English, with Amy Burton, Rachel Rosales, Richard Drews, Jeff Mattsey, and John Calvin West; Scott Bergeson. (Oct. 17 at 8.)... **REGINA,** with Leigh Munro, Sheryl Woods, Elizabeth Futral, LeRoy Lehr, Andrew Wentzel, and Ron Baker; Laurie Anne Hunter. (Oct. 18 at 1:30 and Oct. 20 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ST. PETERSBURG OPERA—This chamber-scaled ensemble (not to be confused with the St. Petersburg National Opera, remembered glumly from its visit last March) will present scenes from Russian operas rarely encountered in these parts, including Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Snow Maiden," Tchaikovsky's "The Enchantress," and Alexander Smelkov's "The Fifth Voyage of Christopher Columbus." (New York University Theatre, 35 W. 4th St. Oct. 14 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

RECITALS

ROBERT TAUB—It used to be accepted that Alban Berg's Piano Sonata of 1908 (which carries the opus number 1) was the composer's first and only piano work. But it turns out that the Sonata was actually a destination reached via several shorter works—namely, a set of variations and a group of three miniatures, which remained unnoticed and unpublished until two years ago. Mr. Taub here presents the American premières of the three short pieces (two Klavierstücke plus the "Kleiner Walzer"). Having peeked, we can advise listeners who prefer Brahms to atonality that they will not be disappointed; and to underscore their historical context, Mr. Taub will sandwich the pieces between Brahms' seven "Fantasias" (Op. 116) and Berg's Sonata. Also on the program are two works by Milton Babbitt (with whom the pianist is widely identified): his first piano piece ("Three Compositions," 1947-48) and his most recent one ("Preludes, Interludes, and Postlude," in its New York première). The concert concludes with what Mr. Taub calls "the most revolutionary piece of them all," Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 14 at 8.)

NEW YORK NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE—Performing premières of works by William Brooks (his "Makers: a theater piece for musicians"), Charles Wuorinen, Edmund Campion, and James Dashow, in addition to Bartók's "Contrasts." (Miller Theatre. Oct. 14 at 8.)

BARGEMUSIC—Pianist Anne-Marie McDermott performs Liszt's "Six Études after Paganini Caprices"; Nai-Yuan Hu joins her in Ravel's Violin Sonata; and cellist Warren Lash rounds out the ensemble for Schumann's "Fantasiestücke" (Op. 88) and F-Major Piano Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Oct. 15 at 7:30 and Oct. 18 at 4.)

MUSIC FROM THE COMPOSERS CONFERENCE—Efrain Guigui directs works featured at the Wellesley-based new-music center, by Lee Hyla, Zhou Long, Eric Moe, Mike Ross, and Augusta Thomas. (Miller Theatre. Oct. 15 at 8.)

HELICON ENSEMBLE—Harpsichordist Albert Fuller leads his group in chamber works by Rameau, Telemann, J. C. Bach, and Haydn (Johann Peter Salomon's chamber reduction of the "London" Symphony). (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Oct. 16 at 8.)

SHURA CHERKASSKY—The pianist performs Beethoven's Sonata in E-Flat (Op. 27, No. 1), Schumann's "Kreisleriana," Debussy's "Pour le Piano," Liszt's paraphrase of Wagner's "Tannhäuser" Overture, and a handful of works by Rachmaninoff. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Oct. 17 at 8.)

BEAUX ARTS TRIO—Almost nothing presents as great a challenge to a long-standing chamber-music ensemble as a change in personnel. All eyes (and ears) will be on the *primus inter pares* of piano trios as it opens its new season with a new violinist: Ida Kavafian (replacing Isidore Cohen), already well known to New York audiences as a mainstay of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. She will join cellist Peter Wiley and pianist Menahem Pressler (who has been with the group since it was founded, in 1955) to play Brahms' B-Major Trio, the New York première of George Rochberg's "Summer, 1990," and Fauré's G-Minor Piano Quartet (in which violist Lawrence Dutton will assist). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 17 and Oct. 23 at 8.)

EMANUEL VARDI—There is now a New York Viola Society, for those who love the mellowest of the string instruments. In its first public event, the group presents Mr. Vardi, an august practitioner of the violist's art, playing works by Hindemith, Paganini, Tibor

Serly, and others; assisted by pianist Norman Carey and violist Rosemary Glyde. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 580-0210. Oct. 18 at 1:30.)

Ensemble Rebel—Recorder player Matthias Maute joins the Dutch early-music quartet in works by Rosenmüller, Vivaldi, Leclair, Telemann, and Jean-Féry Rebel (the mid-Baroque French composer after whom the group takes its name). Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-0675. Oct. 18 at 4.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting a Mozart flute quartet, works by Saint-Saëns and Ravel (both involving harpist Nancy Allen), and Schubert's "Trout" Quintet (with guest pianist John Browning). (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 16 at 8 and Oct. 18 at 5.)

American Festival of Microtonal Music—In their ongoing exploration of music built on notes that stand outside the system of equal temperament, the ensemble (plus guests) performs recent compositions by Manfred Stahnke, Alois Hába, Ron Sadoff, Roland Moser, and Maurice Ohana, in addition to earlier compositions by John Bull (the English virginalist) and Johann Phillipp Kirnberger (a pupil of Bach's). (New York University Theatre, 35 W. 4th St. Oct. 17 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Florence Gould Hall Chamber Players—A French sextet, plus colleagues, performs chamber music for strings by Offenbach, D'Indy, Martinů, and others. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Oct. 18 at 3.)

Christina Kiss—The pianist opens the third season of her exhaustive seven-year survey of the keyboard compositions of Liszt, playing (among other works) Liszt's piano transcription of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. (Sorry, folks; no chorus in the finale.) (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 18 at 5:30.)

Manhattan String Quartet—The ensemble embarks on its five-concert traversal of the string quartets of Shostakovich, covering the first three in this installment. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., at plaza level. Oct. 19 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Simon Estes—Bass-baritone, singing songs and arias by Wagner, Brahms, and Verdi, in addition to a group of spirituals; with pianist Diane Richardson. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Oct. 19 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

New Music Consort—Music by women composers: Sofia Gubaidulina, Chen Yi, Ada Gentile, Lori Dobbins, and Joan Tower (her "Platinum Spirals," for solo violin). (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Oct. 21 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

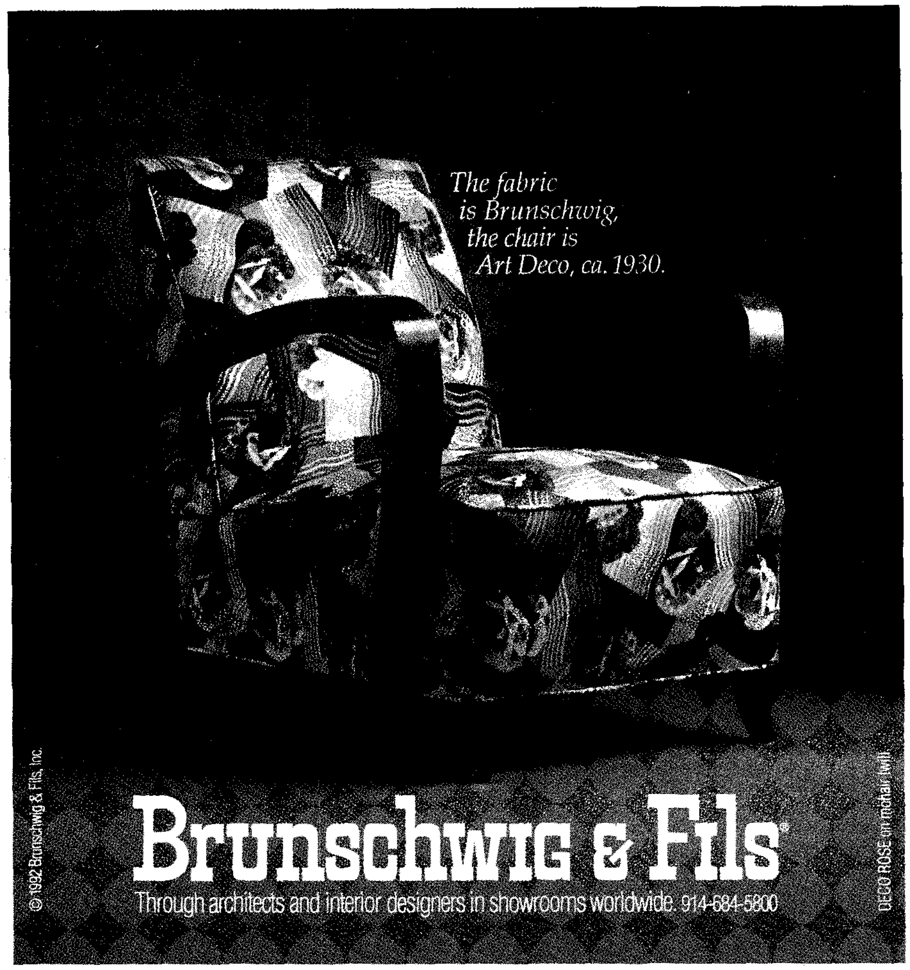
ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 13 at 7:30: Erich Leinsdorf conducts an all-Stravinsky program. . . . ¶ Oct. 15 and Oct. 17 at 8, Oct. 16 at 2, and Oct. 20 at 7:30: Michael Morgan conducts the première of Daron Hagen's "Philharmonia (A Fanfare)," Brahms' Serenade No. 2, Kodály's "Dances of Galánta," and Grieg's Piano Concerto (with Garrick Ohlsson).

Philadelphia Orchestra—David Zinman conducts Webern's "Im Sommerwind," Bartók's "Miraculous Mandarin" Suite, Barber's "Music for a Scene from Shelley," and Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto (with Richard Goode). (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 13 at 8.)

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducts operatic excerpts by Rossini, Bellini, and Berlioz, as well as Mendelssohn's incidental music for "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; with soprano Kathleen Battle, mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade, and the women of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 14-15 at 8.)

Concordia—Marin Alsop conducts the chamber orchestra in an all-Gershwin concert, including his "Concerto in F" (in Paul Whiteman's jazz-band version, featuring pia-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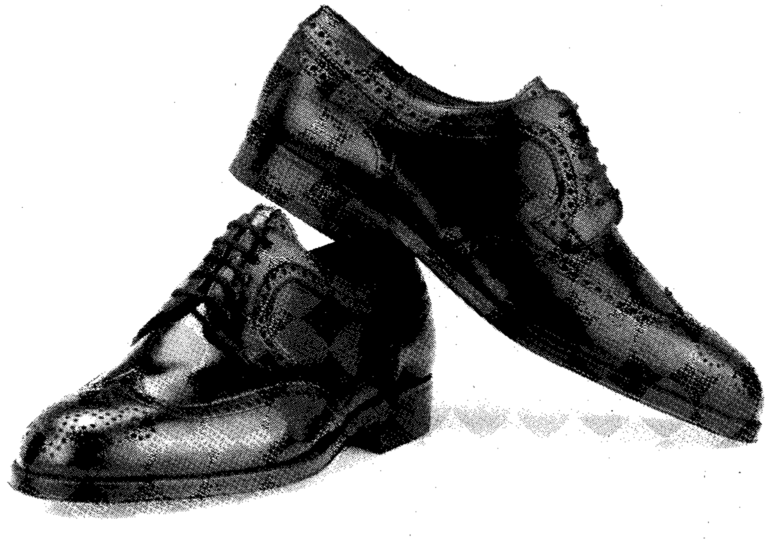
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FRATELLI ROSSETTI

nist Leslie Stifelman), "An American in Paris," and a staged, tap-danced rendition of songs from "Shall We Dance." (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 15 at 8.)

Camerata Bern—Thomas Füri conducts Bach's *Concerto for Three Violins and Concerto for* Oboe d'Amore (the latter featuring Heinz Holliger), Sándor Veress's "Passacaglia for Oboe" (also with Mr. Holliger as soloist), and an arrangement for string orchestra (by Joan Berkhemer) of Liszt's B-Minor Piano Sonata. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 16 at 8.)

Atlantic Sinfonietta—Edvard Tchivzhel conducts Martinů's Nonet, Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat" Suite, and works by Laurence Wallach and Margaret Ramsey Meachem; featuring soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 17 at 8.)

Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal—At Carnegie Hall, Charles Dutoit conducting. Oct. 17 at 8: Berlioz's "Roman Carnival Overture," Rachmaninoff's "Symphonic Dances," and a handful of Rossini arias (featuring mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli). . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 3: Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte" Overture, Chausson's Symphony in B-Flat, Ravel's "Rapsodie Espagnole," and (with violinist Shlomo Mintz) Bruch's "Scottish Fantasy."

Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra—Dmitri Kitaenko conducts Webern's Passacaglia for Orchestra, Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5, and Brahms' Violin Concerto (with violinist Cho-Liang Lin). (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 20 at 8.)

Orchestra da Camera del Festival Internazionale di Brescia e Bergamo—Agostino Orizio conducts two of Rossini's early string sonatas, as well as works (both based on the music of Rossini) by Azio Corghi and Eliodoro Sollima. Soprano Cecilia Gasdia is among the soloists. (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 20 at 8.)

Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala—Riccardo Muti directs Verdi's Requiem, with soloists Maria Dragoni (soprano), Lucia D'Intino (mezzo-soprano), Richard Leech (tenor), and Samuel Ramey (bass). (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 21 and Oct. 23 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Shirley Horn—This Washington, D.C.-based singer and pianist has been recording jazz, popular-music standards, and film soundtracks on various labels since the late fifties, but Verve deserves credit for acting on the realization that Miss Horn is a treasure. By giving last year's "You Won't Forget Me" and this year's "Here's to Life" vigorous support, the company now has a star of uncommon sensitivity and taste, with a voice as graceful as curling smoke in a blue spotlight. There's not a reason in the world to pass up this opportunity to hear her perform. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Oct. 15 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

Lyle Lovett—With four nearly flawless albums in six years—"Joshua Judges Ruth" is the latest—this wry, deadpan Texas singer-songwriter has established himself as a singular comic presence and a consummate pop utility man. Country, blues, gospel, jazz-tinged ballads—Lovett handles them all with aplomb and a laconic, mildly *twisted drollness. But it would be a* mistake to conclude that wit takes precedence over emotion in his music. It's true that his lyrics deliver wonderful tall-tale twists and great punch lines, but Lovett is also intensely sincere and a powerful portrayer of desolation, joy, family love, and romantic ambivalence. His live performances can tickle you, wring you out, and send you home happily shaking your head. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 15-16 at 8.)

Wynonna Judd—Looking good, Wynonna! The modified leather bustier she wore late last month at the Country Music Association Awards was the hot sartorial equivalent of the declaration of independence she recently made with her first solo album, "Wynonna." The recording is bluesier and more hard-rocking and electric than anything she did with her mom, Naomi. (The album's old-fashioned, quiet tearjerkers and devotional songs are top-notch, too.) After the endless, soporific Judds' Farewell Tour, who would have thought this twenty-eight-year-old veteran had it in her? (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Oct. 16 at 8.)

Frank Sinatra and Shirley MacLaine—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Oct. 12 and Oct. 14-17 at 8, and Oct. 18 at 3 and 8.

Graham Parker—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 14 at 8.

Black Sabbath—Beacon Theatre. Oct. 14 at 8.

Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra—In "Swinging the Blues: Coming Home to Ellington." (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Oct. 14 at 8.)

They Might Be Giants—Eight nights, eight different opening acts. With Syd Straw (Oct. 14); David Thomas (Oct. 15); Boss Hog (Oct. 16); Brian Dewan (Oct. 17); Eugene Chadbourne (Oct. 18); the A-Bones (Oct. 20); Robin Holcomb (Oct. 21); and Drink Me (Oct. 22). (Variety Arts Theatre, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. Concerts at 7, also at 10 on Oct. 16-17.)

Bob Dylan Tribute—With Eric Clapton, George Harrison, John Mellencamp, Willie Nelson, Tom Petty, Neil Young, Dylan himself, and others. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Oct. 16 at 8.)

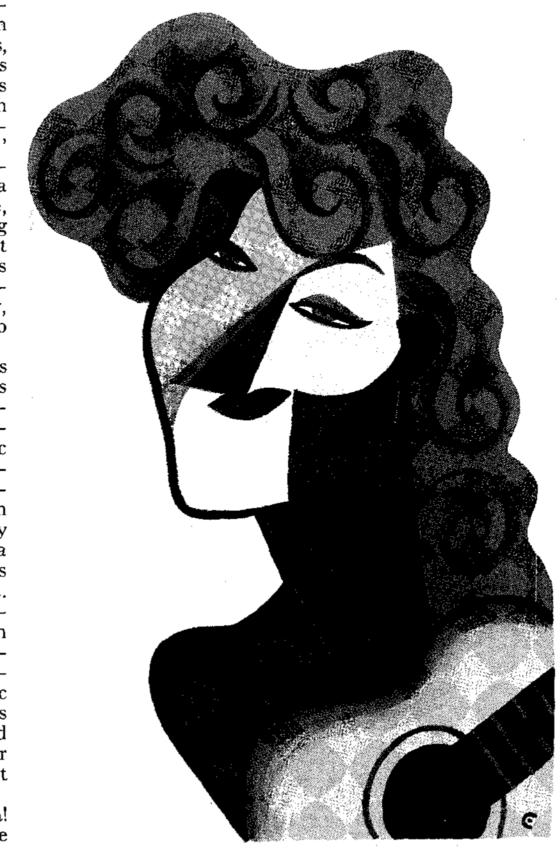
Lavender Light Gospel Choir—Friends Meeting House, 221 E. 15th St. Oct. 17 at 7. Tickets available in advance at the Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop, 15 Christopher St., and at the door on the evening of the concert.

The Radiators—With the Dirty Dozen Brass Band. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Oct. 17 at 8.)

The Rippingtons—With Dave Koz. (Beacon Theatre. Oct. 17 at 8.)

Kitaro—Radio City Music Hall. Oct. 21-22 at 8.

"Cabaret Comes to Carnegie"—Oct. 14: David Staller. . . . ¶ Oct. 21: Marcia Lewis. (Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800. Concerts at 8.)



Wynonna Judd

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Rangers—The home opener is Oct. 12, vs. the Hartford Whalers. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, Oct. 14. . . . ¶ Vs. the Islanders, Oct. 18. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Capitals, Oct. 21. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Rangers, Oct. 17. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Oct. 20. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Washington Capitals, Oct. 12. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Oct. 17. . . . ¶ Vs. the Hartford Whalers, Oct. 20. (Game time, 7:35.)

(The Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

CHAMPIONSHIP—BASEBALL

Playoffs—The A's and Blue Jays series continues, if necessary, Oct. 12 in Oakland, and Oct. 14-15 in Toronto. The Braves and Pirates series continues, if necessary, Oct. 13-14 in Atlanta. The World Series starts Oct. 17.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Dog Day—The people at the A.S.P.C.A. are sponsoring, on Oct. 18 in Central Park, their second annual dog walkathon to help homeless pets. "Bowwow-wow yippee yo yippee yay, bowwow yippee yo yippee yay." For information and registration, call 876-7708.

County Fair in the Bronx—Hayrides, square dances, country music, and other kinds of wholesome entertainment are in the offing at the New York Botanical Garden on Oct. 17-18, from 10 to 5. Also: pumpkins, apples, crafts galore, pressed flowers, dried flowers, and topiary. For more information, call 220-8700.

Talks—Oct. 14 at 6: Diane Ackerman gives a lecture. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. For information about tickets, call 930-0571.). . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 7: Julio Marzán talks about the poetry of William Carlos Williams. (Poets House, 72 Spring St. Tickets at the door on the night of the talk.). . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 8: Hilton Als, Gregg Bordowitz, Gran Fury, James Meyer, and Jo Shane talk about the impact of AIDS on the art industry. (School of Visual Arts, 209 E. 23rd St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 7:30: Doris Jean Austin, Jonathan Franzen, Maureen Howard, and Richard Price discuss "Visions of the City in Fiction." (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Sq. S., at Macdougal St. No tickets necessary.)

Readings—Oct. 15 at 7: James Gleick reads from "Genius." (Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 7: Robert Hass reads from his own poetry. (Alumni Heights Lounge, New York University, 24 Waverly Pl. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Oct. 20 at 7: Linda Pastan and Nancy Willard read from their own poetry. (French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Oct. 20 at 7: Daniel Stern and Jonathan Dee read from their own poetry. (Limbo, 47 Ave. A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Oct. 20 at 8: Robert Stone reads from "Outerbridge Reach." (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Oct. 21 at 7:30: Susan Minot reads from her new novel. (Shakespeare & Co., 2259 Broadway, at 81st St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Oct. 21 at 8: Susan Sontag reads from her new novel, "The Volcano Lover." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.)

Walks—Oct. 17 at 10 A.M.: A stroll in Central Park, with a view to the fall foliage. For more information, call 360-2766. . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 4: A walk across the Brooklyn Bridge, sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. For more information, call 439-1049.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Enchanted April" (†).
Theatre 2: "Light Sleeper" (directed by Paul Schrader), with Willem Dafoe and Susan Sarandon.
Theatre 3: "The Living End" (Gregg Araki).
Theatre 4: "Alberto Express" (Arthur Joffe).
Theatre 5: Through Oct. 13: "Night on Earth" (Jim Jarmusch). From Oct. 14: "Simple Men" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke and William Sage.
Theatre 6: "Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Oct. 15: "The Wrong Move" (1975, Wim Wenders; in German).
From Oct. 16: "American Fabulous" (Reno Dakota), a documentary.

Newman Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Oct. 14: "Macbeth" (1948, Orson Welles), with Welles.
Oct. 15: "Hamlet" (1964, Grigori Kozintsev; in Russian).
From Oct. 16: Theatre closed.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 15: "Innocent Blood" (John Landis). From Oct. 16: "Candyman" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).
Theatre 3: "Husbands and Wives" (†).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "School Ties" (Robert Mandel), with Brendan Fraser.
Theatre 3: "Blade Runner" (1982, Ridley Scott), with Harrison Ford.
Theatre 4: "A River Runs Through It" (†).
Theatre 5: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 6: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).
Theatre 7: "Singles" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez.
Theatre 2: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 15: "Laws of Gravity" (Nick Gomez). From Oct. 16: "Deadly Currents" (Simcha Jacobovici), a documentary.
Theatre 4: Through Oct. 15: "Gas Food Lodging" (Allison Anders). From Oct. 16: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 5: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).
Theatre 6: "Sarafina!" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Refrigerator" (Nicholas A. E. Jacobs).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Husbands and Wives" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 15: "Breaking the Rules" (Neal Israel). From Oct. 16: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 3: "Bob Roberts" (†).
Theatre 4: "Husbands and Wives" (†).
Theatre 5: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).
Theatre 6: "Innocent Blood" (John Landis).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Player" (Robert Altman), with Tim Robbins.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Mr. Saturday Night" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Of Mice and Men" (†).
Theatre 2: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 15: "Sarafina!" (†). From Oct. 16: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 4: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 30.

Joe Pesci in "The Public Eye"

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: "School Ties" (Robert Mandel), with Brendan Fraser.
Theatre 3: "Hero" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through Oct. 15: "Sneakers" (†).
From Oct. 16: "The Public Eye" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Double Edge" (Amos Kollek), with Faye Dunaway.

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Sarafina!" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 13: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez. From Oct. 14: "Simple Men" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke and William Sage.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The Last of the Mohicans" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 15: "Breaking the Rules" (Neal Israel). From Oct. 16: "South Central" (Steve Anderson), with Glenn Plummer and Carl Lumbly.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Honeymoon in Vegas" (Andrew Bergman), with James Caan, Nicolas Cage, and Sarah Jessica Parker.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 15: "Hero" (†). From Oct. 16: "Night and the City" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 15: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†). From Oct. 16: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 2: "Bob Roberts" (†).
Theatre 3: "Enchanted April" (†).

Art East Cinema, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)
"Alberto Express" (Arthur Joffe).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Sneakers" (†).
Theatre 2: "Of Mice and Men" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 13: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†). From Oct. 14: "The Public Eye" (†).
Theatre 4: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).
Theatre 5: "Singles" (†).
Theatre 6: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 15: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal. From Oct. 16: "Candyman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Under Siege."

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Husbands and Wives" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "A River Runs Through It" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mr. Saturday Night" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Johnny Stecchino" (Roberto Benigni), with Benigni.

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"School Ties" (Robert Mandel), with Brendan Fraser.

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Sneakers" (†).
Theatre 2: "Hero" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Husbands and Wives" (†).
Theatre 2: "Singles" (†).
Theatre 3: "Mr. Saturday Night" (†).
Theatre 4: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).
Theatre 5: "Of Mice and Men" (†).
Theatre 6: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 7: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 15: "Sarafina!" (†). From Oct. 16: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 2: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 20: "Feed" (directed by Kevin Rafferty and James Ridgeway), a documentary. From Oct. 21: "Interpretation of Dreams" (1990, Andrei Zagdansky; in Russian).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Together Alone" (1991, P. J. Castellaneta).

UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM

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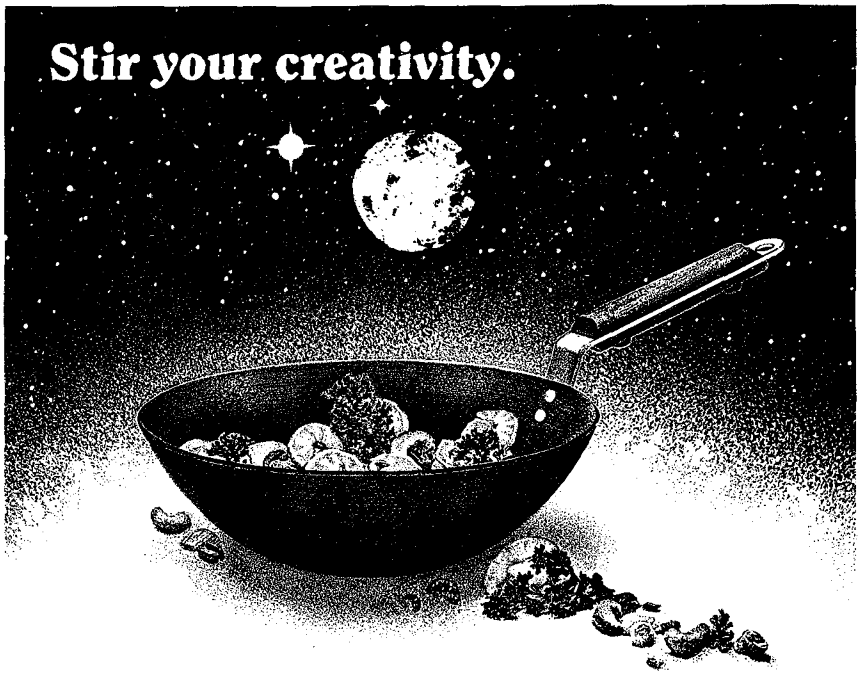

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Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Sneakers" (†).
Theatre 2: "Of Mice and Men" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 15: "Honeymoon in Vegas" (Andrew Bergman), with James Caan, Nicolas Cage, and Sarah Jessica Parker. From Oct. 16: "The Public Eye" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Mr. Saturday Night" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Fine Romance" (Gene Saks), with Julie Andrews and Marcello Mastroianni.
Theatre 3: "Brother's Keeper" (Joe Berlin[illegible] and Bruce Sinofsky), a documentary.
Theatre 4: "Bob Roberts" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: "Of Mice and Men" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 15: "Mr. Saturday Night" (†). From Oct. 16: "The Public Eye" (†).
Theatre 4: "Sneakers" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).
Theatre 6: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.
Theatre 7: "Hero" (†).
Theatre 8: "Sarafina!" (†).
Theatre 9: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 15: "Singles" (†). From Oct. 16: "South Central" (Steve Anderson), with Glenn Plummer and Carl Lumbly.
Theatre 2: "School Ties" (Robert Mandel), with Brendan Fraser.
Theatre 3: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through Oct. 15: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez.
From Oct. 16: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Single White Female" (Barbet Schroeder), with Bridget Fonda and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 2: "Sneakers" (†).
Theatre 3: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.
Theatre 4: Through Oct. 15: "Light Sleeper" (Paul Schrader), with Willem Dafoe and Susan Sarandon. From Oct. 16: "The Public Eye" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).
Theatre 6: "Bob Roberts" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Mr. Saturday Night" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Bob Roberts" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Of Mice and Men" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 15: "Of Mice and Men" (†). From Oct. 16: "Deadly Currents" (Simcha Jacobovici), a documentary.

Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Howards End" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins, Vanessa Redgrave, and Emm[illegible] Thompson.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Gas Food Lodging" (Allison Anders).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"A River Runs Through It" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Mr. Saturday Night" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Danzón" (Maria Novaro; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "A Brief History of Time" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 20: "Swoon" (Tom Kalin). From Oct. 21: "Waterland" (Stephen Gyllenhaal), with Jeremy Irons, Ethan Hawke, and Sinead Cusack.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"The Last of the Mohicans" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Husbands and Wives" (†).

Theatre 2: "School Ties" (Robert Mandel), with Brendan Fraser.

Theatre 3: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).

Theatre 4: "Hero" (†).

Theatre 5: Through Oct. 15: "Singles" (†). From Oct. 16: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.

Theatre 6: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal.

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Sneakers" (†).

Theatre 2: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Sarafina!" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Under Siege" (directed by Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal.

Theatre 2: "Under Siege."

Theatre 3: Through Oct. 15: "Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood). From Oct. 16: "Candyman" (†).

Theatre 4: "Singles" (†).

Theatre 5: "Hellraiser III: Hell on Earth" (Anthony Hickox).

Theatre 6: "Innocent Blood" (John Landis).

Theatre 7: Through Oct. 15: "Rapid Fire" (Dwight H. Little), with Brandon Lee. From Oct. 16: "South Central" (Steve Anderson), with Glenn Plummer and Carl Lumbly.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Sarafina!" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "Hero" (†).

Theatre 2: "School Ties" (Robert Mandel), with Brendan Fraser.

Theatre 3: Through Oct. 15: "Captain Ron" (Thom Eberhardt), with Kurt Russell. From Oct. 16: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez.

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.

Theatre 2: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)

Oct. 14-15: "The Last Picture Show" (1971, directed by Peter Bogdanovich), with Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges, Cybill Shepherd, Ben Johnson, and Cloris Leachman; and "Texasville" (1990, Bogdanovich), with Bridges, Shepherd, Annie Potts, Leachman. Randy Quaid, and Bottoms.

Oct. 16-17: "Jules and Jim" (1962, François Truffaut; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Oskar Werner, and Henri Serre; and "Black Orpheus" (1959, Marcel Camus; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese).

Oct. 18-20: "Batman Returns" (1992, Tim Burton), with Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Christopher Walken; and "Pee-wee's Big Adventure" (1985, Burton), with Pee-wee Herman.

From Oct. 21: "Deliverance" (see page 30); and "The Road Warrior" (1982, George Miller), with Mel Gibson.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Oct. 13-14: "The Wedding" (1972, Andrzej Wajda; in Polish); and "The Shadow Line" (1976, Wajda).

Oct. 15: "Man of Iron" (1981, Andrzej Wajda; in Polish).

From Oct. 16: "The Honeymoon Killers" (1970, Leonard Kastle), with Shirley Stoler and Tony Lo Bianco.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Oct. 14: "Funny Face" (1957, Stanley Donen), with Audrey Hepburn and Fred Astaire; and "Sabrina" (1954, Billy Wilder), with Humphrey Bogart and Hepburn.

Oct. 15: "The African Queen" (1951, John Huston), with Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn; and "The Rainmaker" (†).

Oct. 16-17: "Taxi Driver" (1976, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro; and "Raging Bull" (1980, Scorsese), with De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, and Joe Pesci.

Oct. 18: "Five Easy Pieces" (1970, Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson; and "Easy Rider" (1969, Dennis Hopper), with Peter Fonda, Hopper, and Nicholson.

Oct. 19: "The Woman Next Door" (1981, François Truffaut; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Fanny Ardant; and "The Story of Adèle H." (1975, Truffaut; in French), with Isabelle Adjani.

Oct. 20: "After the Thin Man" (†) and "The Thin Man" (†).

Oct. 21: 'Loves of a Blonde" (1965, Milos Forman; in Czech); and "Ragtime" (†).

Tribeca Cinema, 41 White St. (925-2570)

Oct. 14-15: "Niagara" (1953, Henry Hathaway), with Marilyn Monroe, Joseph Cotten, and Jean Peters; and "Sorry, Wrong Number" (1948, Anatole Litvak), with Barbara Stanwyck and Burt Lancaster.

Oct. 16-17: "The Conformist" (1970, Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian), with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Dominique Sanda; and "Picnic at Hanging Rock" (1975, Peter Weir), with Rachel Roberts.

Oct. 18: "Doctor Zhivago" (1965, David Lean), with Omar Sharif.

Oct. 19-20: "Persona" (1967, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann; and "Shame" (1968, Bergman; in Swedish), with Ullmann, Max von Sydow, and Gunnar Björnstrand.

From Oct. 21: "Women in Love" (1970, Ken Russell), with Alan Bates, Oliver Reed, Glenda Jackson, and Jennie Linden; and "Far from the Madding Crown" (†).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Oct. 12 at 2 and Oct. 15 at 6: "Life on a String" (1992, directed by Chen Kaige; in Chinese).... ¶ Oct. 12 at 5: "Extérieur Nuit" (1980, Jacques Bral; in French).... ¶ Oct. 13 at 2:30: "Petulia" (1968, Richard Lester), with Julie Christie, George C. Scott, and Richard Chamberlain.... ¶ Oct. 13 at 6 and Oct. 16 at 2:30: "M*A*S*H" (1970, Robert Altman), with Donald Sutherland, Elliott Gould, Tom Skerritt, and Sally Kellerman.... ¶ Oct. 15 at 2:30: "Five Easy Pieces" (1970, Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson.... ¶ Oct. 15 at 3 and 6: "Between Two Worlds" (1990, Barry Greenwald), a documentary.... ¶ Oct. 16 at 6 and Oct. 17 at 1: "Touch of Zen" (1975, King Hu; in Mandarin).... ¶ Oct. 17 at 2:30: "Motel" (1988, Christian Blackwood), a documentary.... ¶ Oct. 17 at 5: "Drowning by Numbers" (1988, Peter Greenaway), with Joan Plowright, Bernard Hill, and Juliet Stephenson.... ¶ Oct. 17 at 5: "My Life for Zarah Leander" (1986, Christian Blackwood; in German).... ¶ Oct. 18 at 2 and Oct. 19 at 6: "The Double Life of Véronique" (1991, Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French and Polish).... ¶ Oct. 18 at 2:30: Three films by Blackwood.... ¶ Oct. 18 at 5 and Oct. 19 at 2 "Amarcord" (1974, Federico Fellini; in Italian).... ¶ Oct. 18 at 5: "Signed: Lino Brocka" (1987, Blackwood), a documentary.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Oct. 14 at 2 and 6:30 and Oct. 15 at 4:15: "Butterfly Wings" (1991, Juanma Bajo Ulloa; in Spanish).... ¶ Oct. 14 at 4:15 and 8:30 and Oct. 15 at 2: "How to Be a Woman and Survive" (1991, Ana Belén; in Spanish).... ¶ Oct. 15 at 6:30 and 8:30: "I Kiss Your Hand, Madame" (1928, Robert Land), with Marlene Dietrich.... ¶ Oct. 16 at 2, 6, and 10 and Oct. 17 at 6 and 10: "The Affairs of Love" (1990, Jaime Chavarri; in Spanish).... ¶ Oct. 16-17 at 4 and 8: "Happy Ever After" (1991, Pedro Pinzolas; in Spanish).... ¶ Oct. 17-18 at 2: "The Dark Crystal" (1982, Jim Henson and Frank Oz).... ¶ Oct. 18 at 4 and 6: "Holy Week" (1991, Manuel Guttierez Aragón; in Spanish) and "Sevillanas" (1991, Carlos Saura; in Spanish).

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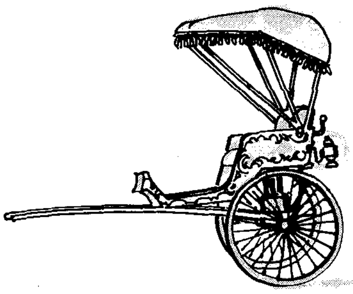

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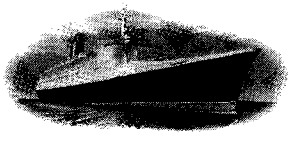

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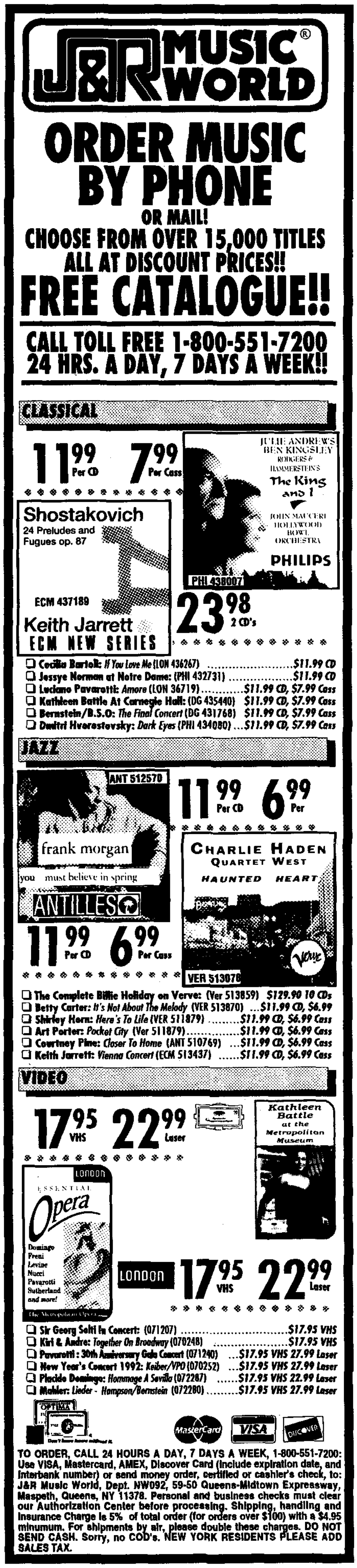

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MOVIES IN BRIEF

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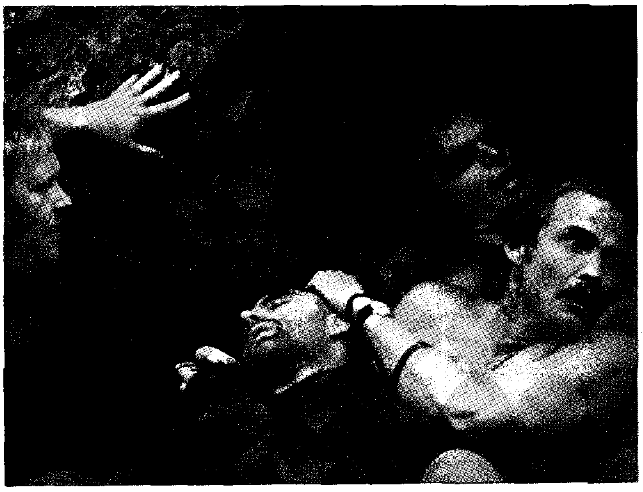
Into the Woods

JOHN BOORMAN'S version of James Dickey's novel, "Deliverance" (playing October 21-22, at the 8th St. Playhouse), couldn't be more ripe for revival than now, when Iron Johns of every variety are crusading into the wilderness to bond and to seek their authentic selves. In this 1972 release (which boasts a screenplay, and a cameo, by Dickey), four middle-class Georgians canoe down the untamed, soon-to-be-dammed Cahulawassee River.

Boorman presents their quest as high macho adventure *and* nightmare. Under the guidance of a blustery outdoorsman named Lewis (Burt Reynolds), the mild-mannered, pipe-smoking Ed (Jon Voight) proves himself in rites of violence. One of their companions is raped, and the other killed. The novel depicts the wild river trip as an enrichment for Lewis and Ed, despite the dire consequences for the affable Bobby (Ned Beatty) and the sane, gentle Drew (Ronny Cox). Unlike the book, the picture is never celebratory; it cleaves to a spooky, neutral tone. The simultaneous attractiveness and destructiveness of taking extreme action is the point of the film. This is one survival drama that's both gut-clutching and mesmerizing. Boorman, his cinematographer, Vilmos Zsigmond, and his editor, Tom Priestly, capture the spring of a canoe when the current snags it, the terror of a vertiginous drop, the eerie stillness of a gorge. They achieve poetic precision even when the men are shooting rapids. The movie has a mysterious beauty, like a landscape that changes drastically when night falls.



Ned Beatty, Herbert (Cowboy) Coward, Burt Reynolds, and Jon Voight in "Deliverance"

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

AFTER THE THIN MAN (1936)—This second of the six films that make up the "Thin Man" series, starring William Powell and Myrna Loy as Nick and Nora Charles, doesn't live up to the first. It isn't particularly entertaining; it's just busy. Elissa Landi (who has peculiarly mushy, ladylike diction) is in distress because she has lost her husband (Alan Marshal) to Penny Singleton. There are a couple of murders, and Asta's mate has puppies. The cast includes James Stewart, Joseph Calleia, Sam Levene, and Jessie Ralph. Like the first film, this one was directed by W. S. Van Dyke, from a screenplay by Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 20.)

BOB ROBERTS—Tim Robbins is the writer, director, and star of this mock documentary that chronicles, C-SPAN style, the senatorial campaign of a young radical-right demagogue. Bob Roberts is a folksinger: instead of giving speeches, he picks up an acoustic guitar and invites his audiences to sing along with his reactionary "protest" anthems. He's Pat Buchanan in Woody Guthrie's clothing, and what's scary about the movie is that this grotesque coupling doesn't even feel like a stretch. Robbins tosses off nasty satiric riffs at a reckless, headlong pace, and the movie, even at its most chilling, is hilarious; its humor is both precise enough to deflate its targets and goofy enough to feel liberating. And his performance as smiling Bob, although it's conceived as a caricature, is never tiresome: it's too finely detailed, and too gleeful. This terrifically entertaining movie represents something very unlikely and very welcome: liberal humor with sharp teeth.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/7/92.) (19th Street East 6, Cinema II, Quad Cinema, Worldwide Cinemas, and Festival.)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME—Errol Morris's inspirational documentary essay about the physicist Stephen Hawking is a cross between a puff piece and a gee-whiz science special. The movie is even more abstract than it has to be, and it's remarkably soft-edged. In the biographical sections, Morris sketches Hawking as a wayward boy wonder who focusses his talents only after he's stricken with Lou Gehrig's disease. As far as characterization goes, that's it. There's some curiosity but no depth in the director's depiction of eccentric British intellectuals; he treats his interviewees as if he were pinning them to specimen boards, except that he doesn't name or identify them. Morris presents Hawking's ironic contrasts between human mortality and the life span of the universe with such hushed awe that he robs them of their delectability. (The familiar ripple of Philip Glass's music doesn't help.) By the end, the film disappears into its own cranium.—M.S. (9/7/92) (Lincoln Plaza.)

CANDYMAN—With Virginia Madsen, Tony Todd, Xander Berkeley, Kasi Lemmons, DeJuan Guy, and Vanessa Williams; directed by Bernard Rose. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gemini, and Criterion Center; starting Oct. 16.)

Enchanted April—Adapted by Peter Barnes from Elizabeth von Arnim's 1922 novel, this period romance has a healthy sprinkling of bewitchments. The lead characters are two proper middle-class English ladies, played by Josie Lawrence and Miranda Richardson, who, partly to get away from their husbands, pool their resources to rent an Italian villa named San Salvatore for a month. They ultimately share expenses with an austere, cultured widow (Joan Plowright) and a gorgeous, bored aristocrat (Polly Walker). Italy awakens the women's sensuality and imagination, and gives them perspective; Lawrence and Richardson end up jolting their deadhead husbands (played by Alfred Molina and Jim Broadbent) back to life. The director, Mike Newell, handles the performers deftly and sympathetically, from the wonderfully ebullient Lawrence and the ravishing Walker to the robustly comical Plowright; Michael Kitchen contributes a tour de force of eccentric charm as the villa's owner. If the film, with its brittle, satiric London scenes and its expansive Italian ones, breaks too distinctly into pieces, the magic of the sunnier locations seals the cracks.—M.S. (8/10/92) (Angelika Film Center, and Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

Far from the Madding Crowd (1967)—John Schlesinger's misconceived attempt to bring the great Hardy novel to the screen is in some ways a very beautiful film. It's a botch, but you can feel that it was made with love. With Julie Christie, Alan Bates, Terence Stamp, and Peter Finch. The script is by Frederic Raphael; the cinematography is by Nicolas Roeg; the music is by Richard Rodney Bennett; the production design is by Richard Macdonald. Dorset stands in for Wessex.—P.K. (Tribeca Cinema; starting Oct. 21.)

1492: Conquest of Paradise—With Gérard Depardieu, Armand Assante, and Sigourney Weaver; directed by Ridley Scott. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Glengarry Glen Ross—David Mamet's 1984 Pulitzer Prize-winner—about real-estate salesmen who put the screws on hapless marks in order to keep their own ugly jobs—made ripping theatre, whatever else it was or wasn't. But the movie, set in the lean Bush years, spells out the characters' despair in cue cards, right from the start, and hammers away at the plot so relentlessly that you can feel the nails entering the back of your skull. Still, the performers provide relief. Ed Harris and Alan Arkin, as the sleek yet panicky Moss and the sad-sack Aaronow, turn their "Are we speaking or are we talking?" duet into an existential Abbott-and-Costello number. Al Pacino, as Roma, Mamet's Mr. Slick, is amusingly lordly: he's simultaneously high-handed and underhanded. And Kevin Spacey, as their steely office manager, Williamson, plants a daringly long fuse and ignites it with the smallest flicker. Only Jack Lemmon, as Shelley (the Machine) Levene, disappoints: he starts strong, but the director, James Foley, lets him drown in unearned emotion, as if this were Lemmon's shot at "Death of a Salesman." Mamet did his own adaptation, adding another ruthless person to the melodrama: a head-office hit man played by Alec Baldwin.—M.S. (10/5/92) (Village Theatre VII, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and 57th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ Cinema I; through Oct. 15.)

Hero—Stephen Frears' new movie often feels like a remake of something from the thirties or forties. Its plot premise—an ordinary man is lionized by the media for a courageous act he didn't perform, and the actual hero can't get anyone to see the truth—provides the sort of material that Preston Sturges and Frank Capra liked to work with. And the script, an original by David Webb Peoples (who also wrote "Unforgiven"), even borrows from John Ford: in a sense, this picture is a screwball-comedy take on "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance." The movie is fascinating to watch, but most of the time you're

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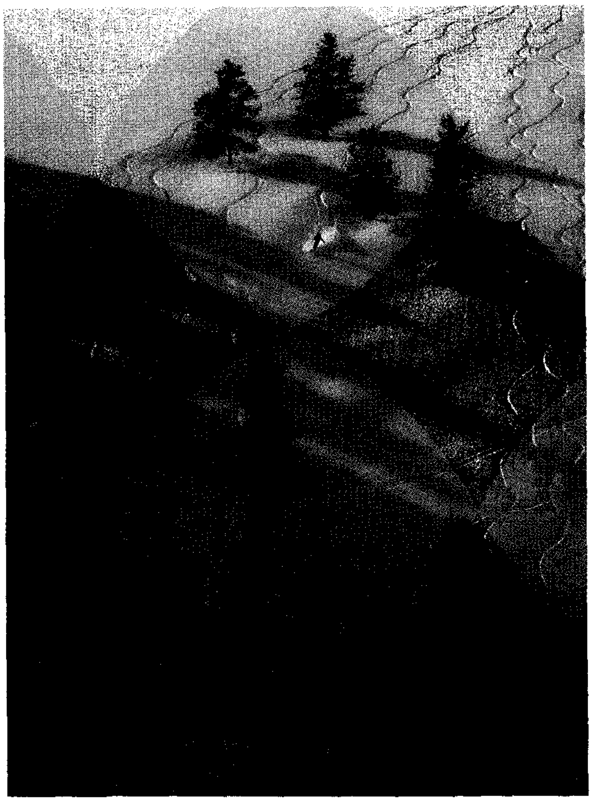

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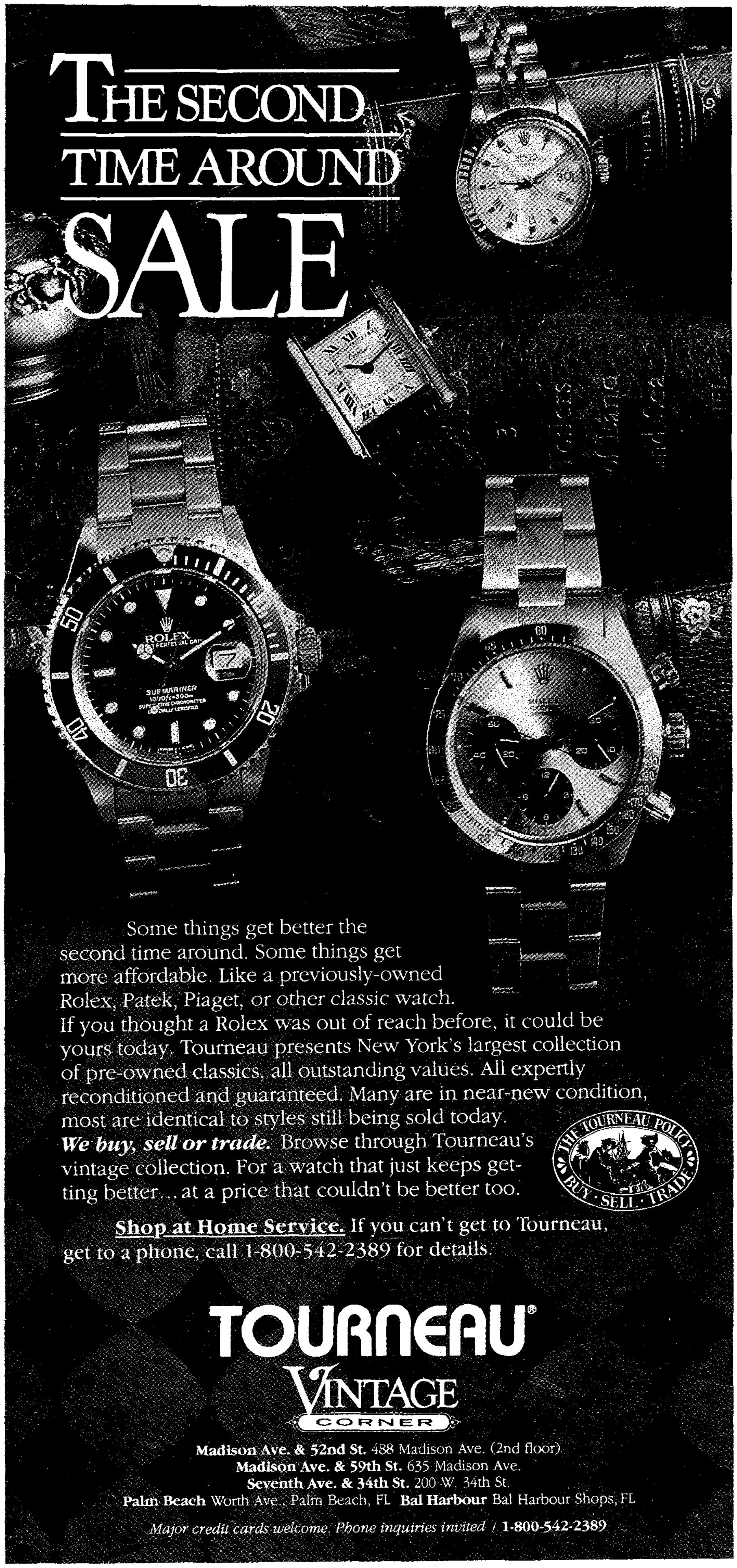

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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

sitting there wondering why this ingeniously constructed script isn't playing better. Simply stated, Peoples hasn't written many funny lines, and Frears' attempts to create comic business visually feel strained and unspontaneous. The filmmakers fail to supply the incidental pleasures and the joyous sense of immediacy that screwball farce—even ironic, subversive screwball farce—can't do without. Dustin Hoffman, who plays the real hero, doesn't get any kind of rhythm going until the movie is almost over; and Andy Garcia, as the faker, can't quite rise above his cryptically written role. But Geena Davis, as a hot-shot TV reporter, is smashing: she strikes a lovely balance between warmth and satiric precision, and holds it in the midst of the general chaos.—T.R. (10/5/92) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Coronet; through Oct. 15.)

HUSBANDS AND WIVES—Woody Allen's uncomfortably personal new movie renders the dissolution of a marriage in a style that's meant to look raw, rough-edged, truthful. He uses jump-cutting and wobbly hand-held camerawork to create the illusion of immediacy, of lifelike spontaneity and muddle. But the movie's vision of life isn't really very persuasive, and Allen isn't saying anything that he hasn't said before. The only thing that has changed since his late-seventies explorations of romantic futility (such as "Annie Hall" and "Manhattan") is the tone, which is now sour, dispirited, almost vindictive. The cinéma-vérité surface feels like a con, a razzle-dazzle cover for imaginative exhaustion. Both the style and the substance of this picture have a curdled quality, the air of things that have gone bad but haven't been thrown away. Except for Judy Davis's ebullient performance as a friend of the central couple, Gabe and Judy Roth (Allen and Mia Farrow), the movie's humor is surprisingly flat. Allen's gags and situations no longer betray even a trace of delight at the absurdities of human behavior: his bemused vision of romantic folly has turned, over the years, into a bilious take-my-wife-please routine. It's tempting to think of this bleakly nihilistic film as an expression of its creator's weariness with his own ideas. The most disturbing, and angering, thing about the picture is that Allen has transformed his disappointment in himself into disgust for other people: he's going down, and he's determined to take the rest of us with him. Also with Liam Neeson, Juliette Lewis, Sydney Pollack, Lysette Anthony, and Benno Schmidt.—T.R. (9/21/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Beekman, Orpheum VII, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS—In Michael Mann's version of James Fenimore Cooper's improbably durable tall tale, everybody looks great: the movie seduces us with haircuts and landscape. The hero of this melodramatic story of pre-Revolutionary America is Hawkeye (Daniel Day-Lewis), a rugged but sensitive individualist who roams the forest of the Hudson Valley in the company of two Indians, Chingachgook (Russell Means) and Uncas (Eric Schweig). The three men serve as guides and bodyguards for Cora and Alice Munro (Madeleine Stowe and Jodhi May), the maidenly daughters of a British officer. The Brits are at war with the French, but the greatest danger to Anglo-Saxon life and limb is posed by a band of bloodthirsty Indian guerrillas, led by a wily Huron named Magua (Wes Studi). The setup pretty much guarantees thrills, and Mann delivers the action-movie goods, but with a sort of abstract, lyrical pictorialism. Day-Lewis's Hawkeye—a cultured white man's dream of virile primitivism—is almost entirely a visual phenomenon, and it works. (He runs well, and sports a terrific mane of straight, stringy alternative-rocker hair.) The picture is awfully, solemnly silly, but it's enjoyable and even rather stirring. Mann has polished up a not very profound myth with skill and conviction, and given it a fetching new look; that's what Pop filmmakers do. Also with Maurice Roëves and Steven Waddington. The lush cinematography is by Dante Spinotti.—T.R. (10/5/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

Mr. Saturday Night—Having your joke and eating it, too—that's what Billy Crystal manages to pull off, repeatedly, in this sprawling, laughing-through-tears extravaganza (his directorial début). As Buddy Young, Jr., whom he created almost ten years ago and developed on "Saturday Night Live" and HBO specials, Crystal pays homage to the Borscht Belt masters of disrespect who brought their tumultuous brand of vulgar, irreverent clowning into the American mainstream during the Golden Age of Television. The Buddy of this movie is sharper and funnier than his previous incarnations: at times, he's a showcase for Crystal's own crack wit and inventiveness. Crystal and his co-writers (Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel) aim to get behind the ironic mask of this Yiddish harlequin and reveal the fierce ambition and bitterness that fuel his put-downs. Crystal is fairly tough about Buddy's self-destructive drive and his parasitic relationship with his brother and right-hand man, Stan (David Paymer). But he also wants to honor Jewish roots, building to a family-reconciliation finish. What saves the film from terminal mawkishness is the chemistry between Crystal and that remarkable actor, Paymer. Crystal's Buddy is always pitching, sometimes wildly. Paymer's Stan is always catching, and, in a subtle, self-abnegating way, calling the shots. With Julie Warner, Mary Maya, Helen Hunt, and Ron Silver.—M.S. (10/5/92) (Bay Cinema, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Quad Cinema, Ziegfeld, and 62nd & Broadway. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas; through Oct. 15.)

Night and the City—With Jessica Lange and Robert De Niro, directed by Irwin Winkler. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Coronet; starting Oct. 16.)

Of Mice and Men—The director and co-star, Gary Sinise, has been quoted as saying, "I saw the 1939 film version and it was such a product of its time that it meant nothing to me. I thought Lon Chaney, Jr., was real hammy." Actually, Lewis Milestone's version of John Steinbeck's tragic fable, with Burgess Meredith as the shrewd ranch hand George and Chaney as the simple giant Lenny, is a wonderfully wrought classic. This new movie, adapted by Horton Foote—with Sinise as George and John Malkovich as Lenny—is the one that goes high on the hog. Led by Sinise, who edges his profile into every shot as if he were a model in a rustic-clothing catalogue, and Malkovich, who carries on like a further infantilized Tommy Smothers (his upper register recalls Tweety Pie), the cast acts with self-conscious, surface physicality. Ray Walston fits right in with the histrionics on this film's Steppenwolf Ranch; even Joe Morton catches the overacting bug. At least Casey Siemaszko is down-to-earth as the bully, Curley, but for all the talk of humanizing his flirty wife, Sinise hangs Sherilyn Fenn out to dry. The only restrained performance is given by Lenny's pup.—M.S. (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

The Public Eye—With Joe Pesci, Barbara Hershey, Stanley Tucci, Jerry Adler, and Jared Harris; directed by Howard Franklin. (Reviewed in this issue.) (First & 62nd Cinemas; starting Oct. 14. . . . ¶ 34th St. East, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas; starting Oct. 16.)

Ragtime (1981)—The movie doesn't have an impudent slapstick vision, isn't a pop epic, or even a satiric fling. It's limp—it always seems to be aiming about halfway toward the effects that E. L. Doctorow achieved in his literary extravaganza. Is it possible that the director, Milos Forman, thought that if

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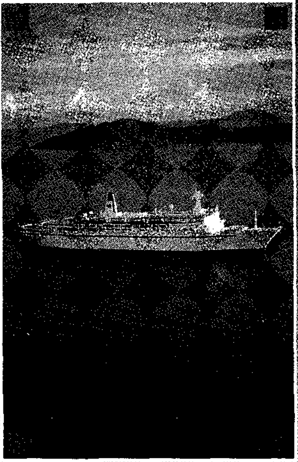

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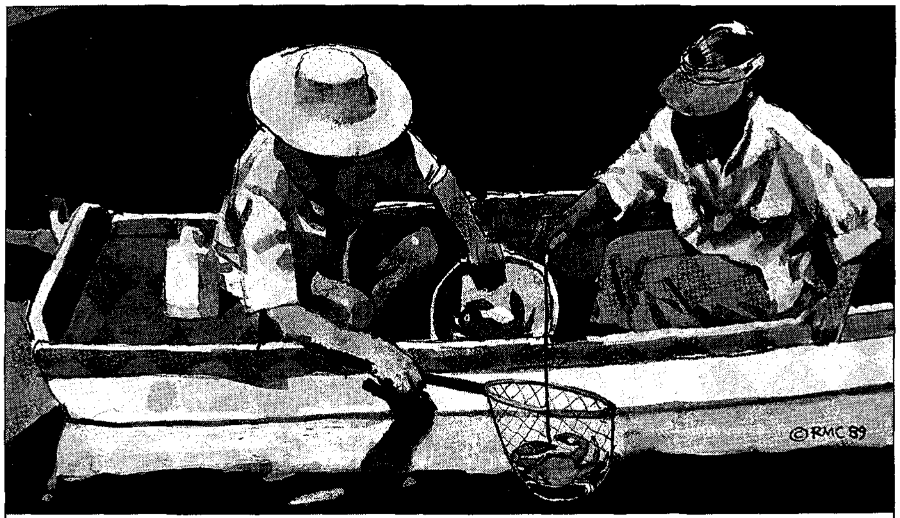

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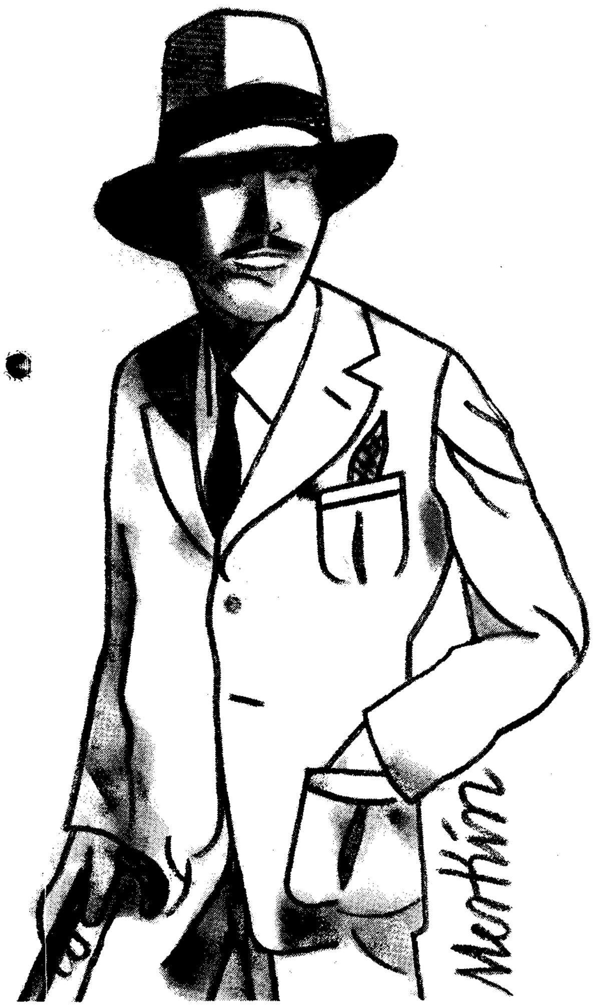
he didn't go for the razzle-dazzle what was left would be "truth"? If so, he started from the wrong book. He has made a seriously intended eccentric movie about a black piano player (Howard E. Rollins, Jr.) who demands redress for an insult. (Dog excrement has been put on the seat of his shiny new Model T Ford.) When the piano player can't find a legal remedy, he becomes a bomb-planting terrorist. But this character is so totally, aberrantly unbelievable that there's no social milieu that could account for him, and we don't know on what conceivable basis he could have recruited his band of urban guerrillas. Forman is not—to put it courteously—strongly visual. His extras are generally posed frozen-faced in a row in the background—they look exactly like extras. The narrative shifts are jerky; the film seems chewed up rather than edited. With James Cagney as the New York Police Commissioner; returning to the screen after a twenty-year retirement, Cagney has the faint, satisfied smile of an old tiger. Also with Pat O'Brien, Donald O'Connor, Norman Mailer, Elizabeth McGovern, Mary Steenburgen, Mandy Patinkin, Kenneth McMillan, Moses Gunn, Brad Dourif, Robert Joy, and James Olson. Script by Michael Weller.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 21.)

THE RAINMAKER (1956)—The cow-town spinster suffering from drought is Katharine Hepburn, and the man who delivers the rain is Burt Lancaster. The casting is just about perfect. Lancaster has an athletic role, in which he can also be very touching. His con man isn't a simple trickster; he's a poet and dreamer who needs to convince people of his magical powers. Hepburn is stringy and tomboyish, believably plain yet magnetically beautiful. This is a fairy tale ("The Ugly Duckling") dressed up as a bucolic comedy and padded out with metaphysical falsies, but it is also genuinely appealing, in a crude, good-spirited way, though N. Richard Nash, who wrote both the play and the adaptation, aims too solidly at lower-middle-class tastes. Once transformed, the heroine rejects the poet for the deputy sheriff (Wendell Corey); if there were a sequel, she might be suffering from the drought of his imagination. With Lloyd Bridges, Earl Holliman, Cameron Prud'homme, and Wallace Ford. The director is Joseph Anthony, who also staged this material on Broadway; the movie barely exists as a movie, but if you accept it as an "opened-out" play it's highly enjoyable. Music by Alex North.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 15.)

A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT—With Craig Sheffer, Brad Pitt, and Tom Skerritt; directed by Robert Redford. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village Theatre VII, New York Twin, and Columbus Circle.)

SARAFINA!—It promises to adopt a daring street-cabaret approach to the Soweto children's rebellion in 1976. But after a couple of big numbers shot and cut in the ragged, grabby style of "Fame," the movie version of Mbongeni Ngema's musical drama settles into a conventional coming-of-political-age story. Inspired by an idealistic teacher (played by Whoopi Goldberg, who can't overcome the coy virtuousness of the role), the lead schoolgirl, Sarafina (Leleti Khumalo), unites her reverence for Nelson Mandela and her dreams of school-show stardom, eventually joining the mass youth demonstrations against apartheid and the official curriculum. The writers, William Nicholson and Ngema, and the director, Darrell James Roodt, take admirable positions against violence as well as oppression. But their film is caught between stylized protest and messagey melodrama. The incidents of carnage—especially a young black mob burning a loathsome black constable to death—are more numbing than revelatory. The best shot: Sarafina, dazed and exhausted after incarceration and torture, making her way past a white lawn party to visit her servant mother (Miriam



Dashiell Hammett's "The Thin Man"

RICHARD MERKIN

Makeba).—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, Chelsea Cinemas, Olympia, and Embassy 1. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas, and 86th Street East Twin; through Oct. 15.)

Singles—Cameron Crowe's second film as a writer-director (the first was the lovely 1989 teen comedy "Say Anything") is a buoyant, sweet-tempered little picture about the romantic confusions of some young Seattle apartment-dwellers. It's an ensemble piece, the sort of movie that flits from character to character like a hummingbird. Crowe's touch is so light that you may, in the end, feel a bit unsatisfied—disappointed that the movie's buzzing comic vitality starts to lose its resonance the moment you leave the theatre. This is romantic comedy of the wispiest kind, but the picture is generous, graceful, and consistently funny. The director, in his airy way, has really created a world here: he turns the urban Northwest into a Forest of Arden for young professionals and hopeful grunge-rockers. Campbell Scott and Kyra Sedgwick play Steve and Linda, idealistic yuppies in love, and both prove to be wonderfully deft comedians. And Matt Dillon, as Cliff, the rather dim leader of a band called Citizen Dick, is hilarious. But the standout in Crowe's energetic cast is Bridget Fonda, who plays Janet, a bubbly underachiever inexplicably smitten with Cliff. Fonda is a true original: she brings such reckless, joyous abandon to Janet's pursuit of the unlikely object of desire that she transforms this desperate-love story line into something exuberantly optimistic. This movie shows that Cameron Crowe is a rare bird, too: a sunny realist.—T.R. (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex, and 84th Street Sixplex; through Oct. 15.)

Sneakers—The director, Phil Alden Robinson ("Field of Dreams"), attempts to fashion a liberal thriller-comedy about a group of high-tech security analysts, led by Robert Redford. Under pressure from the National Security Agency, Redford agrees to steal a device that can decode any computer program in the private and public sectors. His character is a sixties survivor (one of the first computer pranksters) who has teamed up with four other overgrown, misfit boys: Sidney Poitier as a canned C.I.A. agent, River Phoenix as an ethereal computer-age juvenile delinquent, Dan Aykroyd as an ex-con gadget freak, and David Strathairn as a blind master of sound tracing. The filmmakers haven't given them the distinctive interplay and kicky gimmicks that can make a comic-book ensemble tickle the fantasy bone. They're a liberal dream team as neutered alternative family, with Redford's love interest, Mary McDonnell, as den mother. The film's smug anti-Republican humor won't win any crossover votes. "Sneakers" exploits an audience's fear of the microchip revolution, then ends up celebrating computer sabotage in the service of progressive causes. It plays into the hands of its enemies; it says that left-wingers *are* a self-righteous élite. With Ben Kingsley, who glowers malignantly in the role of a mysterious genius. From a script by Robinson and the producing-writing duo of Lawrence Lasker and Walter F. Parkes ("WarGames").—M.S. (9/21/92) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ 34th St. East; through Oct. 15.)

The Thin Man (1934)—Directed by the whirlwind W. S. Van Dyke, the Dashiell Hammett detective novel took only sixteen days to film, and the result was one of the most popular pictures of its era. New audiences aren't likely to find it as sparkling as the public did then, because new audiences aren't fed up, as that public was, with what the picture broke away from. It started a new cycle in screen entertainment (as well as a "Thin Man" series, and, later, a TV series and countless TV imitations) by demonstrating that a murder mystery could also be a sophisticated screwball comedy. And it turned several decades of movies upside-down by showing a suave man of the world (William Powell) who made love to his own rich, funny, and good-humored wife (Myrna Loy). As Nick and Nora Charles, Powell and Loy startled and delighted the country by their heavy drinking (without remorse) and unconventional diversions. In one scene Nick takes the air-gun his complaisant wife has just given him for Christmas and shoots the baubles off the Christmas tree. (In the seventies, Lillian Hellman, who by then had written about her long relationship with Hammett, reported that Nora was based on herself.) A married couple, Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich, wrote the script; James Wong Howe was the cinematographer. The cast includes the lovely Maureen O'Sullivan (not wildly talented here), the thoroughly depressing Minna Gombell (her nagging voice always hangs in the air), and Cesar Romero, Porter Hall, Harold Huber, Edward Brophy, Nat Pendleton, Edward Ellis (in the title role), and a famous wirehaired terrier, called Asta here. Warning: There's a lot of plot exposition and by modern standards the storytelling is very leisurely.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 20.)

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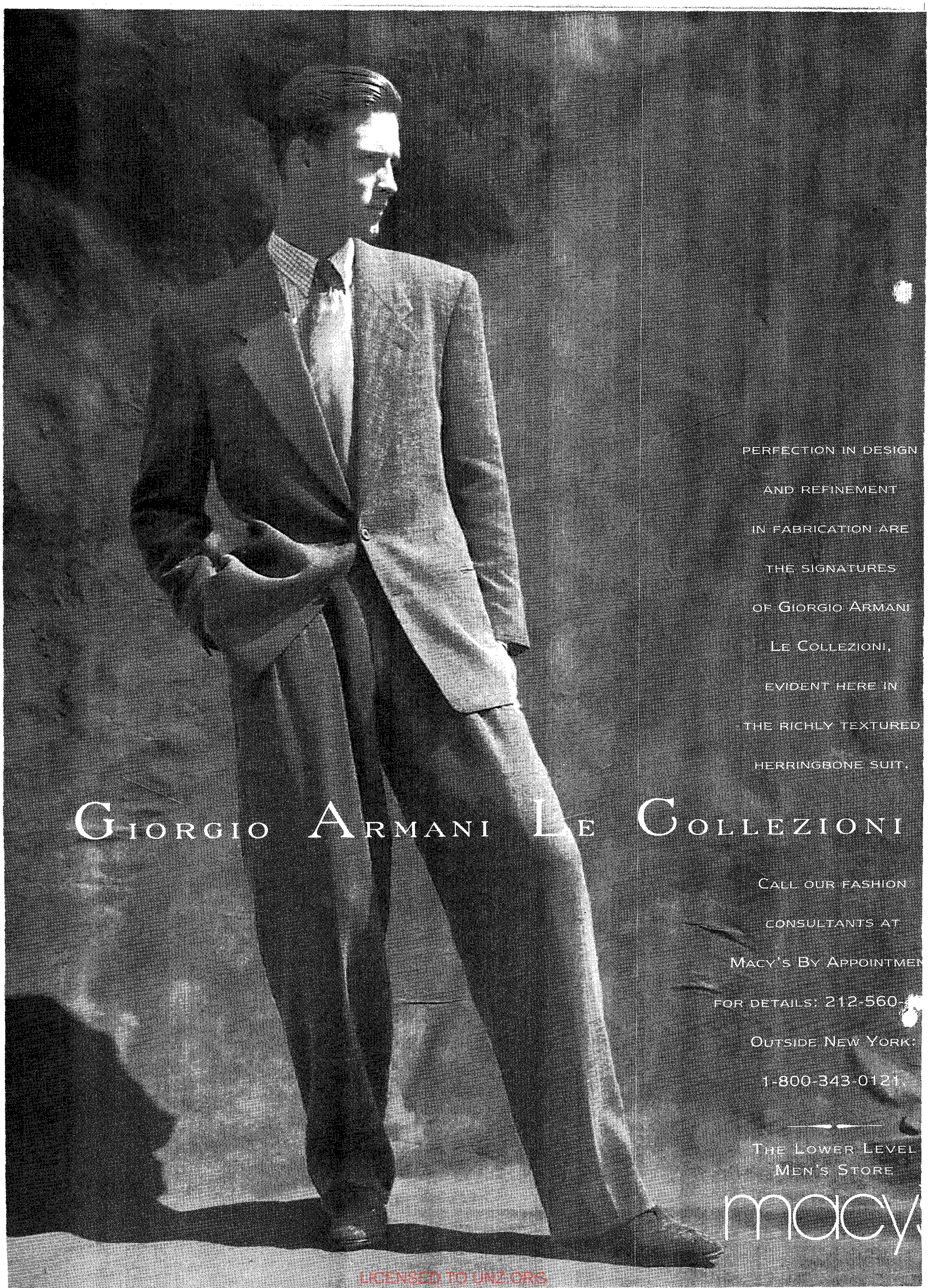

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THE best thing about justice in action is that matters of great urgency are discussed alongside human foibles. When the author Gordon Lish sues *Harper's*, as he has recently done, because it published without permission excerpts from a letter he sent to students of his private writing seminar, you get a serious exploration of fundamental aspects of First Amendment law and, eventually, a decision that either preserves or curtails the freedom of news organizations. You also get a look at the inner workings of a magazine and the inner workings of Gordon Lish.

First, you find out that the whole thing started when Mark Edmundson, a professor of English at the University of Virginia and one of half a dozen people paid to find documents for *Harper's*, sent the letter to Michael Pollan, the magazine's executive editor. Edmundson had received it from Julie Westcott, a friend, to whom it had been sent by an East Coast painter. The painter was never enrolled in the seminar, but had received the letter from Lish after calling him and saying she might be interested in taking his class. "Those were the only words I got in and then he started talking," she later told Pollan.

There is much, much debate over ellipses.

Pollan maintains that the magazine's deletions were "scrupulously fair." Next, he makes clear how they might have been otherwise. At his attorney's urging, Pollan demonstrates how he would have edited the letter differently if he had sought to portray Lish as, say, the leader of a cult.

Gregory Diskant, the attorney representing *Harper's*, later suggests that Lish's classes actually do have cultlike aspects, but the author fails to see how. That brings Diskant to what is sometimes called the Lish Pish Principle, which holds that one is more likely to attain literary greatness if one refrains from visiting the bathroom while listening to Lish's monologues. Lish explains, "I think it's probably safe to say that the more ably one can demonstrate his ability to restrain, hold back against the natural realm in every kind of way, the more he demonstrates to himself the hardness of his interior from which he makes fiction."

There is also a debate over the nature of the letter. John R. MacArthur, the publisher of *Harper's*, calls it a form letter, "an exhortation that doubles as a piece of sales promotion." Lish, who testifies that he believes himself to have "indelibly" entered the century's literary history, says that the letter has no promotional aspect whatsoever, and calls it, among other things, "an exhibition of a certain kind of stylistic device in order to demonstrate the elasticity of the sentence." He adds that *Harper's* did "ruinous, ruinous work" to this exhibition. Lish is particularly aggrieved that what he calls the statement of the theme was excised because Pollan mistook it for a digression.

The writer Roger Rosenblatt, testifying as an expert witness on Lish's behalf, compares the original letter to Beowulf in its use of "incremental repetition," saying material that seems redundant in fact serves to deepen meaning, and he says that the editing done by *Harper's* made Lish appear "clownish." On the other hand, *Harper's* expert witness William Honan, chief cultural correspondent of the *Times*, testifies that the editing was "a very neat, an admirable job of cutting," and that the deleted material was largely "peripheral" and occasionally consisted of "gobbledygook."

Lish's touchiness about being edited is explored. The author concedes that, with the exception of a column he wrote for the *Times Magazine*, none of his published work has been edited, because he will not submit to the process; he says that he is a better writer than any of those who would edit him. Though Lish

is called "volatile" by witnesses, he describes himself as "phlegmatic" and "timid."

There is a debate over the size of Lish's ego. *Harper's* once quoted some fulsome dust-jacket copy on a book of Lish's and then revealed that it had been written by Lish himself. But Jonathan Lerner, Lish's attorney, elicits an admission from the *Harper's* editor Lewis Lapham that he once revised copy on the jacket of his own book, "Imperial Masquerade." Lerner asks whether Lapham's ego and tendency toward self-promotion might not approach those of Lish. Lapham claims Lish is in a class by himself. Lish suspects Lapham of having long borne him some ill will, and cites as evidence the fact that Lapham neglected to invite him in or say thank you when he dropped off another writer's manuscript at Lapham's house twenty years ago. Lapham says he may have mistaken Lish for a messenger.

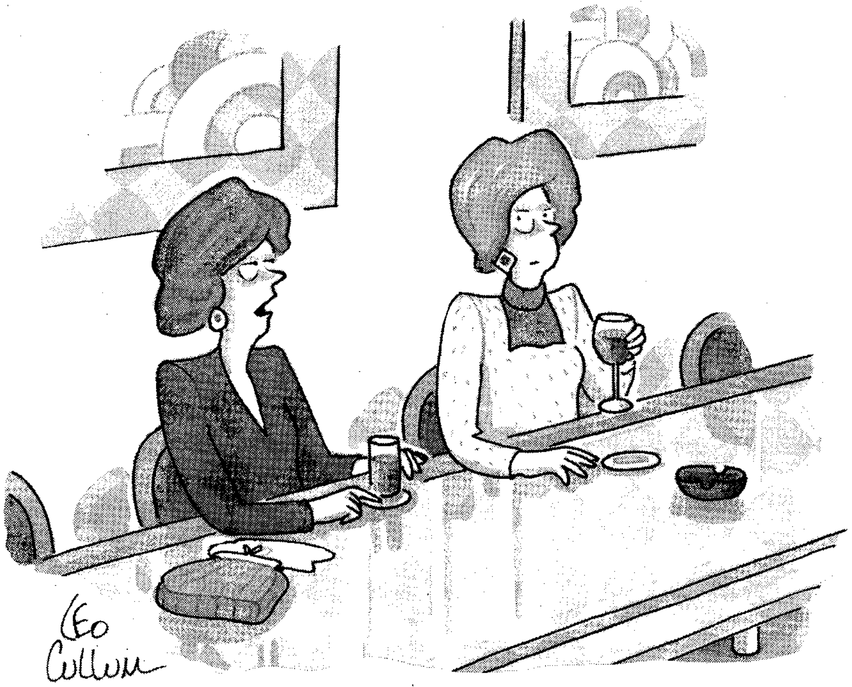
Finally, in a moment that has been given short shrift in news reports of the trial, there is the metaphorical rape of Lish. Asked to describe his reaction to reading his letter in *Harper's*, the author says, in part, "I felt that I had been used in a way that betokened the most mean-spirited views of me. My sentences are all I have. My life has always been an engagement with words. I do not have very much of a physical life. I write, I edit, I teach. And in all of these activities the focus of my attention is sentences. Sentences are continuous with my inmost being. . . . *Harper's* having its way with a piece of writing that I had created, it was as if my body had been spread open to persons who hold me in the lowest esteem and who felt themselves entirely at liberty to enter any portion of it and do with it as they would wish."

VOICE VOTE

THERE are any number of good reasons—polyps, nodules, and laryngitis among them—that you might want to see Dr. Wilbur James Gould, who works with the Center for Communication Disorders at Lenox Hill Hospital, but among his most interesting cases have been those patients suffering from the vocal malady of trying to become the President. "My specialty is acute need," Dr. Gould explained the other day. "Infection, abuse, overuse, fatigue. Jack Kennedy was referred to me in August of 1960, because he had no voice. His main problem was overuse, but too often he was speaking at a high pitch and without a microphone, and it put a strain on his voice. So we lowered his pitch, and things got a lot better. We were able to maintain a hundred days of intense campaigning." Since then, Dr. Gould has found time between his work with celebrities like Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles, Mick Jagger, Plácido Domingo, and Cher, and also with lawyers and salesmen, to treat at least one of the major-party candidates in every Presidential election.

Last April, when Bill Clinton was in town for the local primary, he began to sound increasingly froglike, and, at the urging of his personal laryngologist, Dr. James Suen, of Little Rock, he paid a visit to Dr. Gould's private office, which is carpeted and, like Dr. Gould himself, is acoustically subdued. Not only is Dr. Gould soft-spoken but he is completely silent on the subject of the Governor's visit—how Madison Avenue was blocked off for the occasion, and how things must have been even quieter than usual while Dr. Gould took pictures of Bill Clinton's throat, videotaped his vibrating vocal cords under strobe light, and, of course, made him say ahhh. Dr. Gould and Dr. Suen finally concluded that the Governor had been doing too much talking (especially on airplanes), drinking too much coffee—one campaign staffer guessed twenty cups a day—and packing in the food. "For a while, it was just dinner after dinner," Dr. Suen says, "and he was putting on weight. As a result, he was having acid reflux"—that is, stomach acid was splashing up the esophagus—"which irritated his voice further." But mostly the problem was talking—especially at thirty thousand feet, which is bad, first, because you have to speak very loudly, and, second, because airplane-cabin humidity is generally about twelve per cent, or, as Dr. Gould noted, "less than in the Sahara Desert." The coffee, which is a diuretic, dried the Governor out even more. There were also seasonal allergies, and lack of sleep caused Clinton to talk from his throat instead of his diaphragm. When he left New York, he was put on five days of vocal rest and was told to indulge in periods of silence each day after that. In one of his few press conferences then, he said, "My vocal cords are real bad."

On the sixth day, Clinton was back on the campaign trail, this time in the company of Dr. Bill Riley, a voice trainer from Dr. Gould's office, who, he says, "began watching every aspect of Clinton's life." While Dr. Gould continued to examine photographs of Clinton's vocal cords, Dr. Riley gave him some



"Herbert thinks women should be allowed in combat."

important oratorical pointers. "We tried to get him to approach speaking in terms of singing a beautiful sentence instead of pushing out abstract ideas," Dr. Riley says. Riley's approach is holistic, so the Governor also cut down on the coffee and began to work on losing weight, and he slept on an inclined bed, to keep his stomach acid where it belongs. "The voice isn't just the throat, it's the whole body," Dr. Riley says. "The health of the vocal instrument starts at the feet and goes to the head. Someone wearing bad shoes is going to have a bad voice."

As the debate season approached and Clinton's allergies worsened, the voice doctors began to fret once again. Last Wednesday, the Governor spent another day in vocal rest. Dr. Gould called in from vacation in Italy to see if there was anything he could do. Riley, who had worked with Governor Clinton on everything from breath management to body alignment, remained optimistic. "The question is one of abuse," he said. "If he can get enough sleep, and keep from talking too much, and stay away from cigarette smoke, his voice could be perfect for the debates. His articulation is much clearer now. He paces himself and he's comfortable in delivering a thoughtful idea. He's learned how to let people listen instead of trying to sell the idea." Riley, who said that the New York team was "standing by in case the Governor has a medical need," was reluctant to talk about specific Clinton debate strategies beyond the fact that "he does have a vocal agenda he's working on with us." He added, "His staff would want us to say that Clinton cares only about the issues, but, of course, he knows how important the voice is."

FREE-FOR-ALL

IT'S Friday evening in the East Village, and outside Cooper Union cops stand four feet apart, facing a throng of protesters, among them members of WHAM! (Women's Health Action and Mobilization) and WAC (Women's Action Coalition), assorted feminists, and a contingent of men in drag known as the Church Ladies for Choice, all of whom feel that the Governor of Pennsylvania, Robert Casey, shouldn't be given a platform—at least, not in the East Village—to say why he's pro-life. The pro-

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

To: Mercedes Bass

From: Zeit & Geist Public Relations, Inc.

Re: Recent article in *W* about your new $75-million residences in Fort Worth and New York City

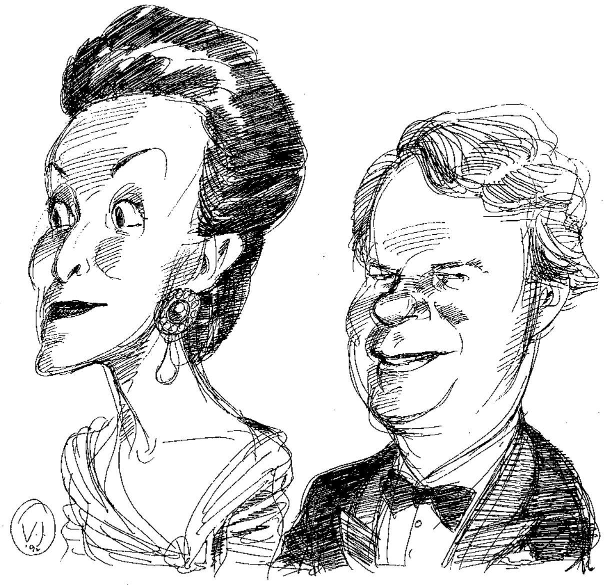
Given homelessness, recession, blah blah, short-term fallout admittedly may be damaging. But medium/long-term we recommend an aggressive spin strategy to reverse perceptions stemming from the piece. Goal: insuring that portrait of you that ultimately emerges is neither "Marie Antoinette" (page 12) nor "Madame de Pompadour" (*ibid.*) but, rather, concerned fighter for the country's economic welfare. Talking points (key buzzwords in CAPS) for future media hits:

1. Re cost of Fort Worth house: $3-million wall, $12-million landscaping, helipad, lake-size fountain, etc. Complacent Easterners may not understand this, but Texas is hurting. Oil prices down, unemployment soaring, lives ruined. We (that is, you and Mr. Bass) choose the SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE course of plowing money back into the Texas economy as LABOR INTENSIVELY as possible. The *W* article teemed with inaccuracies, but at least got it right in saying that the Crestline Road PROJECT involved "an army of workmen . . . 100-strong." Assuming a normal family of four per workman, that makes 400 people who directly benefit (clothing, food, tuition, etc.). Sid (that is, Mr. Bass) and I have always felt that trickle-down begins at home.

2a. Re $9-million co-op on Fifth Avenue, plus $26-million renovations and furnishings. At a time when people are fleeing New York in droves and eroding its tax base, is it wrong for others to register a strong yes vote for the city by making a HOME there? Yes, the apartment needed work. Most 1920s-era apartments do. We were happy to be able to PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT for so many talented UNION craftsmen. Also French and other craftsmen, many of them BILINGUAL.

2b. Imported art and furnishings, including $1.7-million pair of Louis XVI commodes, $825,000 pair of Louis XVI planters, $1.21-million Louis XIV carpet. Also $30k worth of dried topiary for the Aspen lodge. Yes, we have spent a lot of money. The whole POINT OF THE PROJECT was to insure worthy GIFTS when we DONATE BOTH THESE RESIDENCES to New York City and Fort Worth as HOMELESS SHELTERS. Sid and I had been planning to announce the GIFTS upon completion of the work, but *W*, by RUSHING INTO PRINT, has imputed to us less selfless motives. (Obviously, you will want to discuss this approach beforehand with Mr. Bass, but you could emerge as the modern Eleanor Roosevelt—minus the frumpy frocks. Important: remain vague as to the precise timing of the gift.)

—CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY



Mercedes and Sid Bass. Message: They Care

VICTOR JUHASZ

choice set opposes Casey because of his role in Planned Parenthood v. Casey, the Supreme Court case that earlier this year substantially modified the right to abortion by allowing restrictions like parental consent. But, because Casey was excluded from speaking at the Democratic National Convention, Cooper Union and the *Village Voice* have invited him to speak this evening, on the ground that this country protects even unpopular speech.

Inside Cooper Union's Great Hall, the *Village Voice* writer Nat Hentoff, who has himself elicited fireworks at his place of employment for expressing pro-life views, is having trouble introducing Casey. Half the audience is trying to shout Hentoff down, and the other half is shouting at the people shouting at Hentoff. It seems that a large proportion of the audience has a second objection to Casey: it holds him responsible for the fate of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther and journalist, who was convicted in 1982 for the murder of a Philadelphia policeman. Mumia is now on death row, and his lawyers are in the process of filing a habeas-corpus motion, which would give Casey the power to commute Mumia's death sentence. What makes the Mumia matter particularly germane this evening, given the lip service being paid to the First Amendment, is that before being charged with murder Mumia had written exposés of racism in the Philadelphia Police Department, and that the prosecution listed his political opinions in enumerating the reasons he should be given the death penalty.

Casey eventually takes the podium and receives a standing ovation from some of the audience. Others stand silent and with their backs to him. Casey says he is here because he was denied the right to speak at the Convention. "Murderers have no right to speak!" somebody shouts. A whistle is blown insistently, and people boo. "Fuck you!" somebody else yells. Casey finally gets in the observation that he is speaking on the very spot where Abraham Lincoln addressed the issue of slavery. "You're enslaving women!" a woman screams in response. Casey asks, "Will you please give me my First Amendment rights?" Wandering around below the stage is a young woman wearing a gold lamé dress, several lengths of oversized chain made of foam rubber, ghoulish makeup, and a ribbon proclaiming her Miss Pennsylvania Junior Miss. She carries a sign that says "R.I.P." and "Mr. Casey, I couldn't tell my parents." Full-throated war whoops break out as a group races to the front of the room and unfurls a large banner reading "Stop the Execution!" Another group runs up and rips it out of the first group's hands. A third group materializes with a banner reading "Stop the Legal Lynching."

Cops enter the hall. Casey abandons the podium. Hentoff accuses the audience of possible complicity in the death of Mumia: by preventing a dialogue with Casey on the subject, he says, people are losing an opportunity to sway the Governor. The crowd near the stage has grown to about twenty-five, most carrying signs. A chant goes up: "Free speech! Free speech!" It resounds throughout the hall. A second chant gradually drowns it out: "Free Mumia! Free Mumia!" Hentoff has his hand on his chin and is staring at the crowd while Casey confers with three guys in suits. One is Jay Iselin, the president of Cooper Union, and soon he turns to the audience and declares that preventing Casey from speaking doesn't only repeat the wrong done him at the Convention but also violates the traditions of the hall. He asks the hecklers to leave, and says they will be escorted out if they don't. Hentoff takes the microphone and does something very smart: he captures the audience's attention by listing questions he wants to ask Casey about Mumia. But then Hentoff decides that he has to tell the audience it's fascist. Bedlam again. Hentoff thunders that the audience consists of hooligans and, later, chickens with their heads cut off and, later still, yo-yos. Six or seven police officers walk in single file behind a fat man with a beard whom they are escorting out; he has his hands in the air, as if he were being held up.

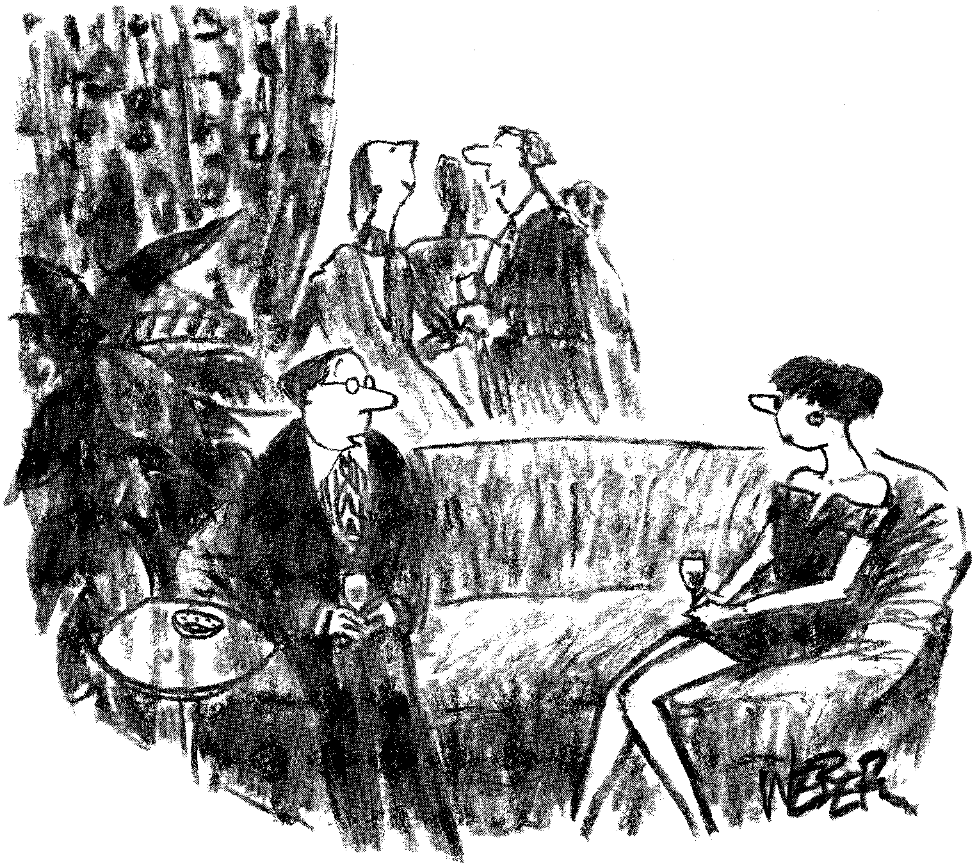
Casey tries again. After mentioning Lincoln a second time, he says that he doesn't know anything about the Mumia case, because it has yet to be brought before him. A young woman with short red hair, who later identifies herself as a German and says that Mumia is the best-known American political prisoner in Germany, silently hands Casey a sheaf of a thousand signatures from people seeking Mumia's release. More noise. Forty-five minutes after the lecture was supposed to begin, Casey declares that the organizers of the Democratic Convention succeeded in suspending the First Amendment and now this audience has succeeded in doing the same. He leaves the stage. A scheduled press conference is never held, because nobody can find the Governor. He has apparently left the building. A clean-cut young man in a sports jacket is inaudibly orating into the microphone, which has been turned off.

ATWATER'S LEGACY

EVERY day, the Bush-Quayle campaign faxes a negative release about Bill Clinton to about a hundred and thirty news organizations and reporters. For the Republican campaign workers, going negative is a mechanical effort to reproduce past victories. But there is a ghost in the machine—or, at least, the Republicans hope to conjure one: the shade of Lee Atwater, the former chairman of the Republican National Committee, who died last year, of a brain tumor. Atwater, who had been George Bush's campaign manager in 1988, was the social opposite of his client in almost every way. But the two men shared a belief in doing whatever it takes, as the President put it at the start of this campaign.

Atwater was a middle-class frat rat from a small South Carolina college, a late-hours blues guitarist who made Willie Horton (a fitting subject for the blues) into a national bogeyman. He specialized in the New South sort of populism, which divides the races through code words and evocative images rather than by the old courthouse race-baiting. He came to Washington as a latter-day Snopes but departed with immense respectability. His memorial service was held in the National Cathedral, and was attended by the President, members of his Cabinet (Secretary of State James Baker delivered a eulogy), and squads of Young Republicans.

Bush's political decline has made Atwater's loss felt even more grievously in Republican circles. At the Republican Convention in Houston, an afternoon was given over to a commemoration, with guitar licks provided by B. B. King, and nostalgic rhetoric by a letter from the President, which was read to a crowd of several thousand in the Astroarena. Mary Matalin, the Bush campaign's deputy campaign manager, who had been Atwater's protégé, has mounted a photograph in her office of Atwater and Bush in T-shirts and shorts—the running mates. She stares at the picture every day. "Yes, I miss Lee," she said recently. "I miss him every hour of every day. I miss him all the time. It's a gap that cannot be filled." She sensed his absence most sharply when the campaign was first gearing up. "How strange it was to be in a campaign without Lee," she recalled. "We'd all been together for so long. Everybody had a role in the family. It was so unnerving. It was like having a family member missing. It was like the first holiday after a family member dies."



"My parents wanted me to join the priesthood, but I didn't think I'd have the stomach for that much controversy."

As Bush has flailed in his bid for reëlection, Republicans have frequently speculated in private about whether Atwater's presence would have made a difference. "The strategy would be the same," Matalin insisted. "But what he brought to the campaign—no one can do it like him. The energy level. The focus." What would Atwater really have done, though? In 1988, he steered Bush through the G.O.P. primaries by a carefully wrought strategy of dividing and conquering the conservatives. Atwater had little use for the social issues of the right wing except as political instruments to gain power. He was personally in favor of legalized abortion. His concept of the G.O.P. as a "big tent" that could accommodate conflicting points of view on abortion directly contradicted the right's understanding of political issues as absolute and moral. During this year's Republican Convention, which the conservatives thoroughly dominated, no trace of Atwater's hypocrisy and opportunism was to be found. It seems doubtful that he would have allowed Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson to set the tone. But Matalin thinks otherwise. "What he could have done, would have done, was not let the media get away with taking two speeches and making them the whole Convention," she contended. "Lee would have spent three days spinning it back."

Atwater's illness, however, left another legacy, making conjecture even more tenuous. In his dying days, his notion of politics underwent a radical transformation. He publicly apologized to Michael Dukakis for the negative campaign he had run against him. And he contributed a long personal testament to *Life* in which he renounced the decade he had helped make possible: "The '80s were about acquiring—acquiring wealth, power, prestige. I know. I acquired more wealth, power and prestige than most. But you can acquire all you want and still feel empty." The nineties, he suggested, demanded a fundamentally different approach: "I don't know who will lead us through the '90s, but they must be made to speak to this spiritual vacuum at the heart of American society, this tumor of the soul." Or was this simply another spin?

Now the demands of the campaign override all. Matalin said, "Lee would be doing what we're doing—having command focus, being tenacious, being ever-present, being ever on the offense, knowing every hour counts, contrasting these two candidates." More and more, Bush's hope has come to depend on those negative faxes dispatched to newsrooms across the country—the visible trail of Atwater's legacy. On October 5th, for instance: "Back in the U.S.S.R. Clinton Followed Anti-War Protest with Visit to Moscow. . . . 'Once again the wheel turns, and this time it lands on Moscow,' said Bush-Quayle Deputy Campaign Manager Mary Matalin. 'The discrepancies and distortions in Bill Clinton's draft record now span more than an ocean or a continent.' " Two days later, on "Larry King Live," President Bush took up her cry.

The notion of Red-baiting after the demise of the Reds would undoubtedly have appealed to Atwater's gleeful cynicism. He was—at least, until his illness—the merry prankster of dirty tricks. ♦

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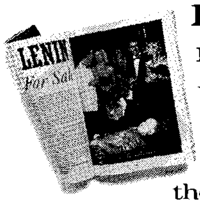

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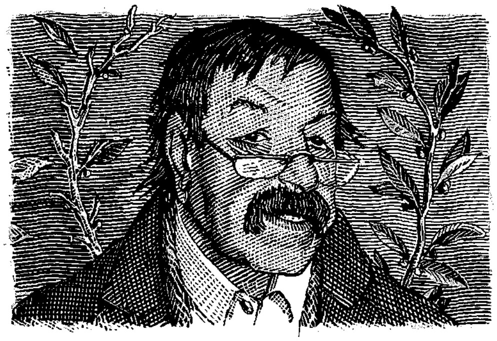
POSTCARD FROM BERLIN

GÜNTER'S GHOSTS

by Ian Buruma

PERHAPS Günter Grass was right. When the two Germanys became one, on October 3, 1990, he predicted anti-foreign riots, right-wing extremism, and bitterness on the part of sixteen million second-class citizens in the East. Each time another group of Gypsies or Angolans gets beaten up by German thugs in bomber jackets and neo-Nazi regalia, you can almost hear Grass's voice saying, "I told you so! I told you so!" But Grass also predicted a German "blitzkrieg" in Poland, unleashed by "D-Mark nationalism." This showed the silly side of Grass. Poland needs every D-Mark it can get. More and more, when Grass speaks in Germany at conferences, seminars, demonstrations, and book fairs, all of which must take up a great deal of his time, the younger members of his audience tend to stare at their shoes and maintain an embarrassed silence. There he goes again, they seem to be thinking, as old Günter, with his mustache, his permanently hangdog expression, and his ghastly pipe, launches into yet another sermon on Auschwitz, Fascism, or American genocide in the Third World.

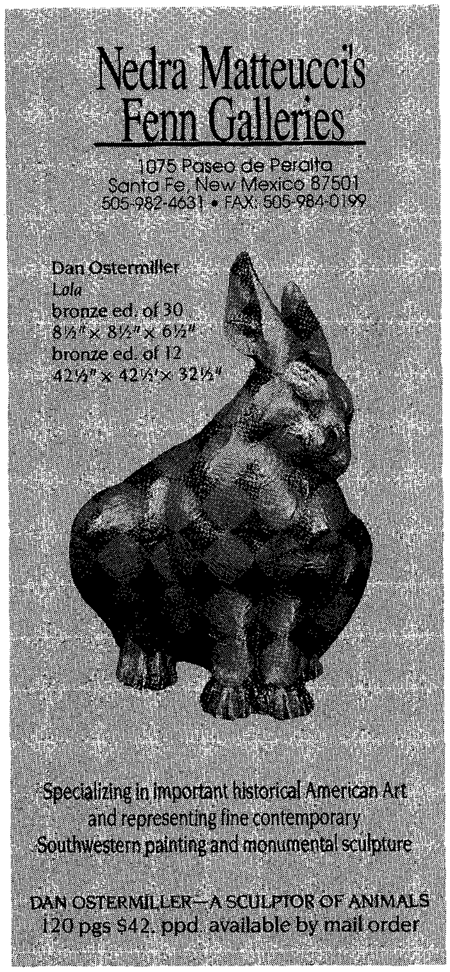


Grass, the moralist of the story.

When Grass's latest novel, "The Call of the Toad," came out in Germany, earlier this year, it was savaged by the two popes of German literature—well, one pope and one clever cardinal. The pope is Marcel Reich-Ranicki, whose book-chat show on television builds and destroys reputations. The clever cardinal is Frank Schirrmacher, the literary editor of the very influential *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. In their reviews the two men made merciless sport of Grass's rather mawkish description of German-Polish reconciliation, the main symbol of which was a romantic encounter, set in a graveyard, between an elderly Polish woman and an old German professor. The beauty of Grass's language was still there, Reich-Ranicki wrote, but the Master had spent so much time moralizing about the state of Germany's soul that he had nothing new to say. Schirrmacher found the book an embarrassing concoction of clichéd ideas and lifeless stereotypes.

Other German reviewers were more charitable, but Grass was so stung by the attacks that he fulminated in interview after interview against all "the critics" who were out to get him "for my political views." In any event, Grass's problems go beyond the literary merits of his latest book. The trouble is partly a matter of age. Grass, who had been a member of the Hitler Youth in the forties, became one of the prophets of 1968—a time of German soul-searching, moralizing, and worrying about resurgent Fascism. But Reich-Ranicki, a Jew who escaped from the Nazis, has needed to worry less about the state of his soul, and Schirrmacher is too young to have been much affected by 1968. Indeed, along with many intellectuals of his age, he is reacting against the platitudes of that era.

Most critics have disliked Grass's increasingly apocalyptic novels, such as "Headbirths" (1980) and "The Rat" (1987). In the latter book, Grass told tales of the end of mankind, with the German chancellor riding through a forest in which concentration-camp victims disguised as mutilated fairy-tale characters were roaming around the poisoned trees. This typically German combination of dark ecology and Nazi trauma found such disfavor that Grass went off to India to sulk. He planned to stay a



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year, but after six months, during which he managed to offend scores of Bengali intellectuals by lecturing them on their faulty attitude toward the poor, the Third World proved too much for him, and he returned to the calmer climes of West Berlin and Schleswig-Holstein, where he has a country retreat. Then the Wall came down, and reunification brought Grass to the fore once again. He missed few opportunities to hold forth on the dangers of West German capitalist triumphalism. Third Reich metaphors began to fly thick and fast. Attempts by the German government to tinker with the laws on asylum seekers, for example—still the most generous laws in Europe—were compared by Grass to the racial laws of Nuremberg in 1935. Eventually, people stopped listening.

Grass's decline comes at a bad moment, for his critical spirit is still needed. Yet he himself is mostly responsible for that decline. Like many prophets, he fell in love with his own role and became self-righteous, hectoring, and sometimes plain wrongheaded. By asserting, as he did in 1990, that Germany could not unify because of Auschwitz, he trivialized the past and utterly misjudged the present. Germany, whatever its problems, is no longer the country it was in 1940, and a prophet who claims otherwise soon finds himself playing the role of a clown. ♦

MAILBOX

To the Editor:

In Annals of the Former World: Assembling California III (September 21st), John McPhee referred to a man who had a "tetragrammatonic mustache." I have looked up that word in the dictionary, and can find no adjective which would describe a mustache. Can you help me on this?

David Macaulay
Sacramento, Calif.

The Tetragrammaton is the four Hebrew letters that make up the name of the Deity, and a tetragrammatonic mustache is the kind of mustache that God would wear—white, bushy, and Biblical. Teddy Roosevelt had one.

The Editors

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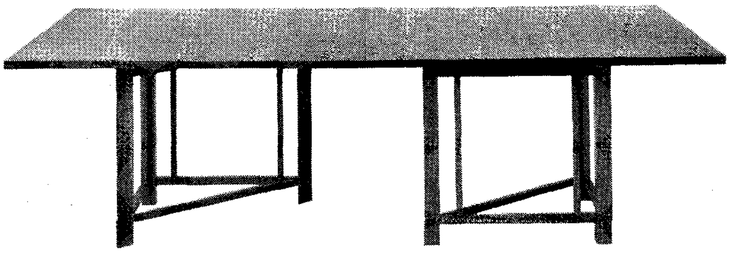

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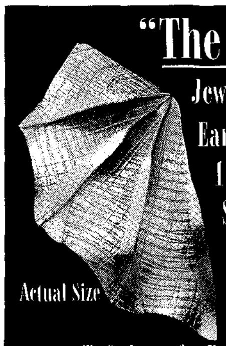

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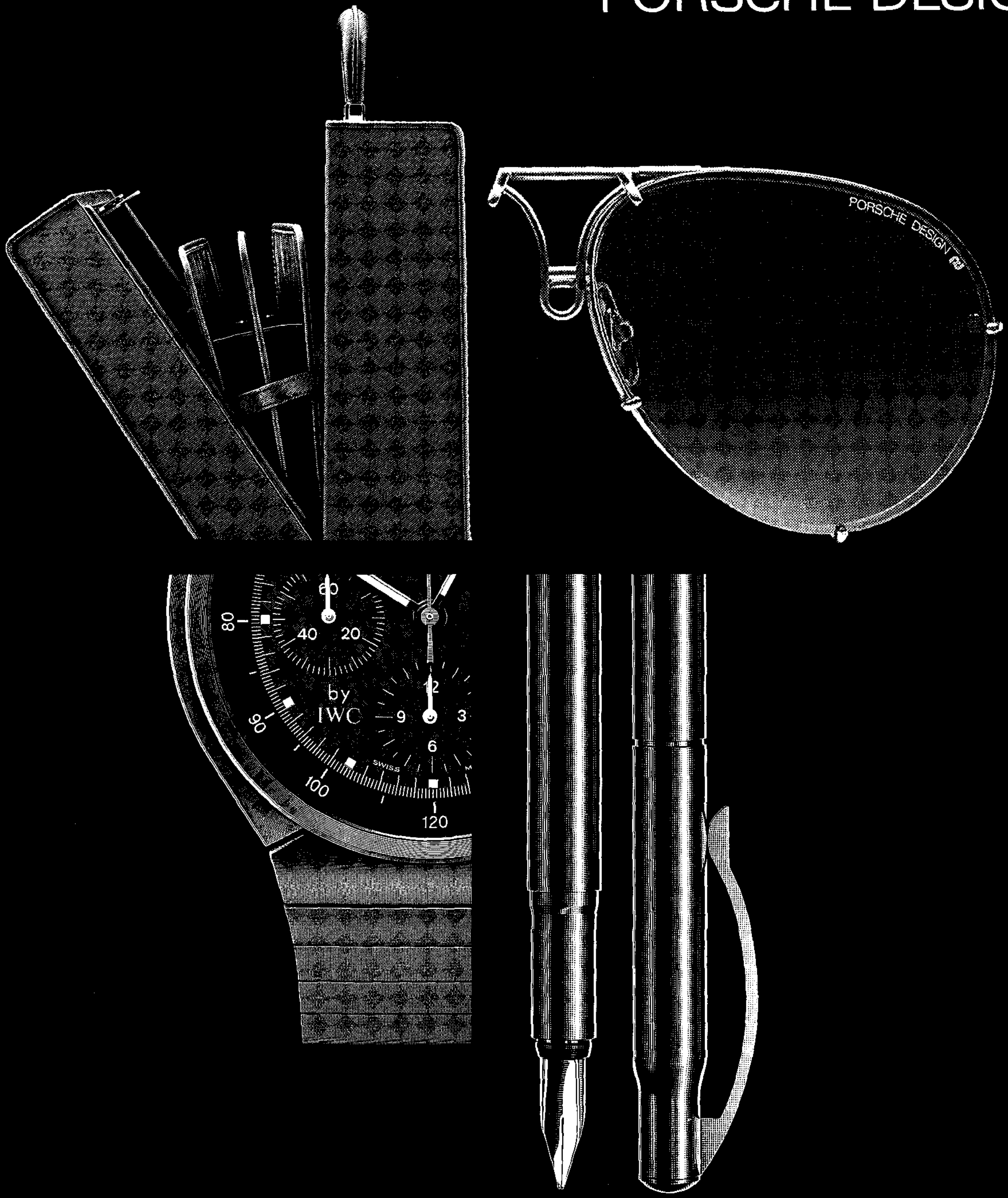
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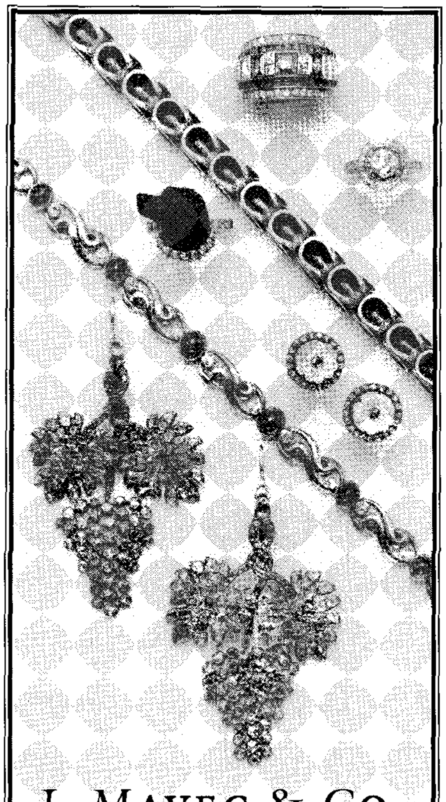

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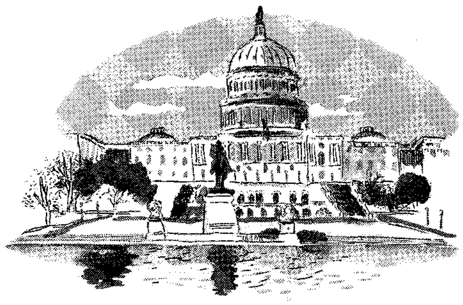
HIGH NOON

by Elizabeth Drew

OCTOBER 8

WHEN James Baker threw the long bomb at the end of September by having George Bush, who had been avoiding debates, suddenly call for four of them, he caught the Clinton campaign in mid-ambivalence. For all Clinton's calling on Bush to debate, and his campaign's delight in having Bush met at each event by someone dressed as a chicken (Bush added to the delight by exasperatedly pointing out the chicken, and even talking to it), the Clinton campaign was deeply divided over whether debates were in Clinton's interest. Clinton himself was (not atypically) of two minds on the question. Some of his top aides had come to the conclusion that his substantial lead in the polls—margins of about ten or more points over Bush nationally, and strong leads in more than enough states for an electoral-college victory—shouldn't be put at risk. By having accepted immediately, in June, the bipartisan commission's proposal for three Presidential debates and a Vice-Presidential debate, all to be conducted with a single moderator, the Clinton people appeared to have taken the high ground. A Clinton adviser says, "We accepted the commission's proposal because we thought they wouldn't." The Bush people wouldn't agree to the commission's dates, and insisted on a panel of reporters, whereupon the Clinton people insisted on the single moderator. But the whole business about the format was a phony war: it gave both sides something to hide behind until they decided whether they actually wanted to debate.



Baker didn't want a debate—at least until Bush had narrowed the gap between himself and Clinton. (An announcement of a scheduled debate is believed to "freeze" a campaign.) And Baker was reluctant to give Clinton the validation a debate would bestow. A Bush-campaign official says, "A debate would give Clinton stature, and a remaining liability for him is that people don't see him as having the stature of a President." (It's not uncommon for Presidential candidates to lack that stature for some time, and then, through a mysterious chemical reaction with the public, suddenly acquire it.) The logic of Baker's ultimate move was clear enough. Bush's campaign was dead in the water: he remained stuck at about forty per cent in the polls no matter what he did, and a sense of the "inevitability" of a Clinton victory—possibly a landslide—was beginning to settle in. The polls were indicating that people were growing firmer in their support for Clinton. It was becoming evident that Bush couldn't win in the existing landscape. So the thing to do was change the landscape. In reversing course on the subject of debates, Baker had to do something sufficiently aggressive to look as if he were taking the offensive—to render moot the "Chicken George" signs with which Bush had been greeted—instead of simply capitulating. Ross Perot's imminent reëntry into the race was seen by the Bush forces as another useful factor in scrambling the picture. A Bush-campaign official says, "We wanted to jump-start the thing, and stop the hemorrhaging on the charge that Bush was afraid to debate."

Some Clinton people had begun to think that Baker might take the risk of no debates, or he might "roll the dice" for one debate near the end of the campaign. The Clinton people bragged that any capitulation by the formidable Baker would be a humiliation for him. "He got lured into our flytrap," a top Clinton

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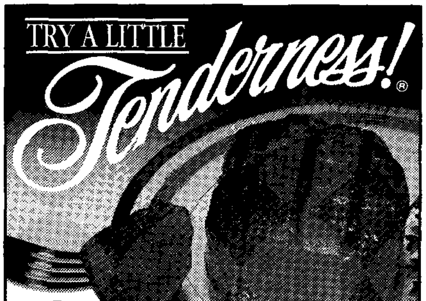

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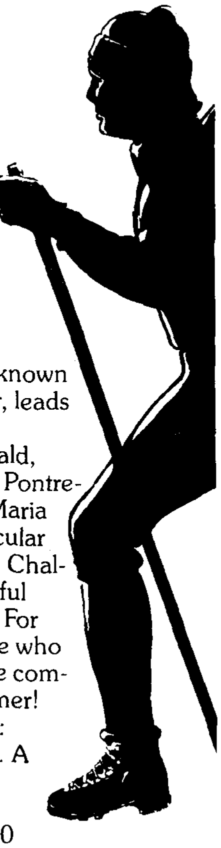

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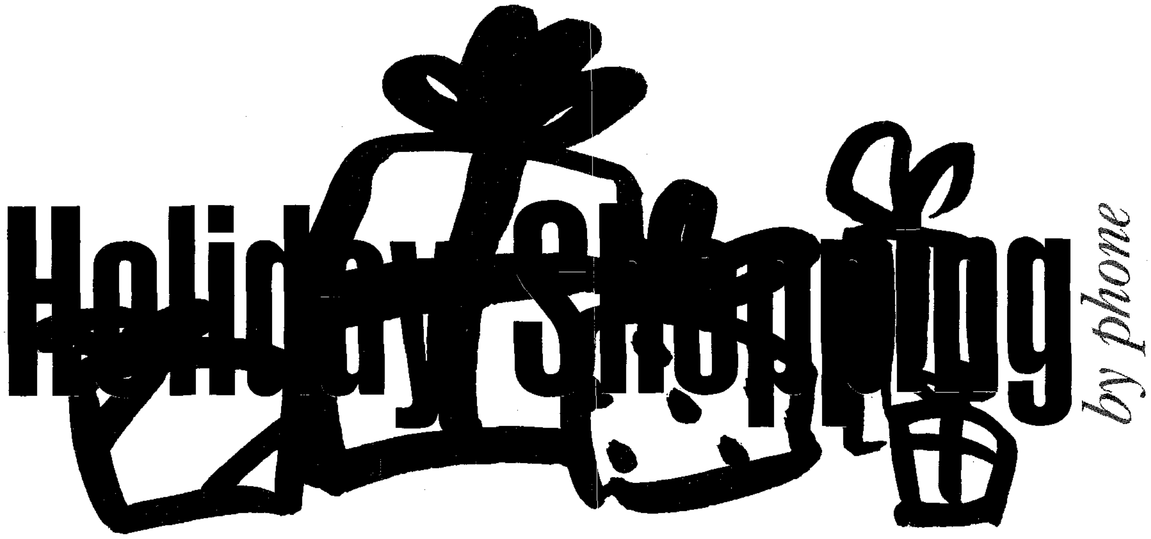
aide exulted to me in Little Rock last week, prematurely. Some Clinton aides were giving serious thought to how to avoid a late debate—or any debate. With bravado, they spoke of setting a cutoff date, and of hewing to the commission's rules as if they were the Ten Commandments; but they knew that the public relations of avoiding a late debate, if Bush in fact called for one, would be a problem. Mickey Kantor, Clinton's campaign chairman, and one or two others in the high command were of the view that Clinton should debate Bush. These people believed that Clinton did need the validation that comes with standing onstage with a President—that, despite his lead, he still hadn't "closed the sale," and that an opportunity to appear before some sixty million people would help him get elected with a mandate. Clinton is said to believe in the importance of a mandate for governing, in contrast to Bush, who in 1988 campaigned on irrelevancies and emerged without a mandate—except to not raise taxes. Others in Little Rock are less interested in mandates and want to concentrate on just getting Clinton elected.

The opposition to debates of some key Clinton aides grew out of more than tactical considerations. For one thing, Clinton hadn't been outstanding in the primary-season debates. Further, he still hasn't cured his tendency toward prolixity. Even some of Clinton's staunch supporters realized that his need to show how much he knows might not wear well in a series of debates. Actually, the Clinton campaign was trying to avoid *any* risk to its strong lead. One Clinton strategist said, "There's a downside to anything you do." Clinton's schedule had been reduced, so as to avoid a gaffe by an exhausted candidate, and he wasn't doing anything chancy. But this in itself was a risk, because Clinton still hadn't given enough definition to his candidacy.

Baker's long bomb ended the internal debate in the Clinton camp. Coming as it did late in the day, a few hours after the Bush campaign turned down the commission's second scheduled debate, it took the Clinton people by surprise—though they had been warned by an outside adviser that Baker might make a dramatic move, and soon. Because of their ambivalence, the Clinton people appeared to have been caught flatfooted, and were put briefly on the defensive while they scrambled for a response. At first, they stalled, saying they wouldn't meet the Bush people outside the purview of the commission, but this wasn't a tenable position; they had no choice but to sit down with the Bush people. And thus both sides ultimately agreed on three debates, along with a Vice-Presidential debate, and split the difference on the format.

THE support for Clinton in the polls wasn't solid enough to alleviate the anxieties in Little Rock. Clinton aides recount with satisfaction the important states where Clinton leads with commanding margins (he now has double-digit leads in such states as California, Michigan, Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania) and states (particularly Florida, and states in the South and the Southwest) that Bush was still visiting but should have long since put away. (Clinton's aggressive strategy—Clinton himself pressed for the effort he's made in Florida, despite the misgivings of his advisers that it was too long a shot—has forced Bush to spend time and money in states Republicans would once take for granted.) Nonetheless, various Clinton aides were concerned that a month's worth of negative ads and attacks on Clinton himself, coupled with a sustained charge that he is a compulsive taxer, could do serious damage to their candidate. Some Clinton aides admitted privately that the tax attacks were starting to damage Clinton; that's one reason a recent Bush negative ad on taxes was countered with uncommon swiftness by a Clinton ad. (Clinton's heated comments to reporters about the ad were another sign that the issue was hitting home.) The Bush-Quayle campaign's focus-group exercises with swing voters—in particular, Reagan Democrats—indicated that taxes is the one issue that lures these voters away from him. Another late-campaign danger to Clinton, obviously, would be a truly damaging story about his personal life, especially if he doesn't handle it



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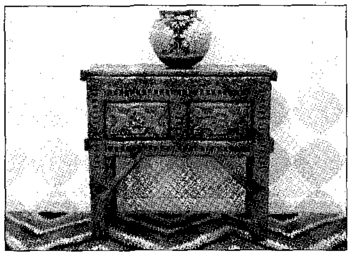

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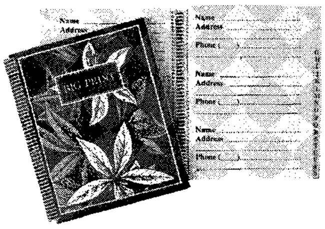

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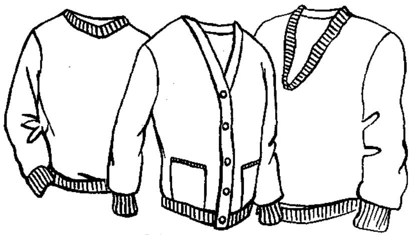

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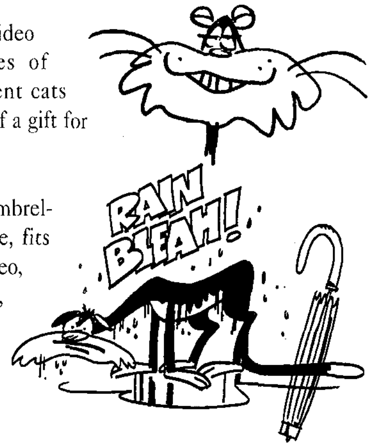

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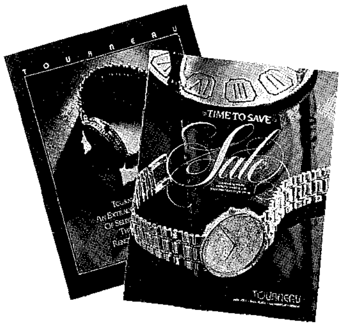

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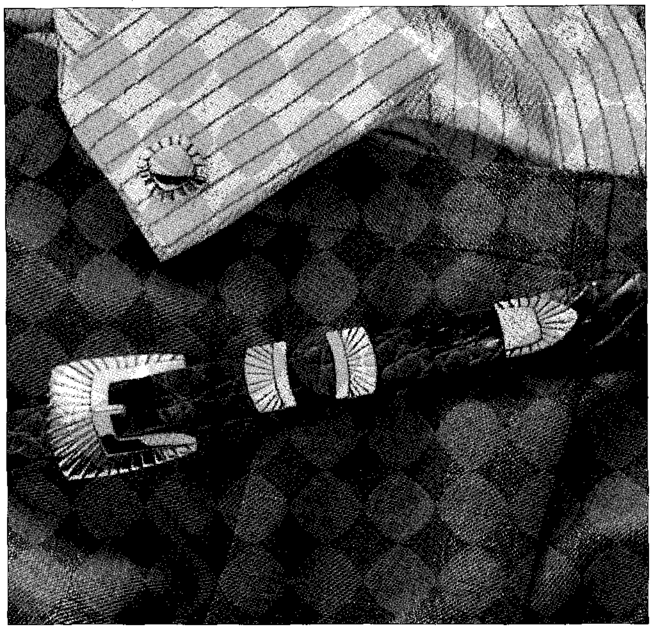

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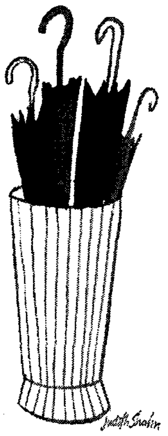
well. (A lot of people assume that if the Republicans have anything potentially disabling they are holding it till close to the end.) The Clinton people hope that by talking a lot about the dirty campaign that they expect the Bush people to wage they have "inoculated" the public to resist such stories. The Willie Horton issue still haunts the Bush people.

The potential damage of the tax attack only added to the frustration of some Clinton advisers with his reluctance—or inability—to make his priorities clear. The worry is that to the extent Clinton is vague about what he plans to do if elected, Bush fills in the picture with tax increases. One of Clinton's advisers said to me in Little Rock recently, "I wish that when Bush hurls taxes at us we had something harder for it to bounce off of."



Before Clinton shut down this week for final preparations for the debates—he had been preparing for some time—his campaigning had taken on a sort of pattern. Interspersed among his stump speeches—which went at Bush hard on the economy—was the occasional "lofty" speech, designed to make Clinton appear Presidential. These were largely policy speeches—on industrial policy, on his health plan (which didn't answer some hard questions), on foreign policy. A Clinton adviser says, "The important thing about foreign policy is just doing it"—having Clinton talk about it. Not only would this ground not be conceded to Bush but an attempt would be made to turn Bush's strongest hand into a liability. A tough speech by Al Gore last week on the mounting evidence of the Bush Administration's prewar coddling of Saddam Hussein—and its continuation of this policy despite clear evidence, seen at the highest levels of our government, that subsidized agricultural credits were being diverted to develop a nuclear and chemical-weapons arsenal—concluded with the charge that Bush, by leading Saddam to believe we wouldn't block his actions, and permitting the sale to him of useful military equipment, had actually caused the Gulf War to come about. More disclosures unhelpful to Bush have come out this week about Iraq.

Clinton's foreign-policy speeches, and statements issued in Clinton's name, have kept him close enough to the respectable center on foreign policy to fend off Republican attempts to portray him as a lefty. He has allowed little light to show between Bush's positions and his own—and, on occasion, as in urging that the United States be prepared to back United Nations relief efforts in Bosnia by force, he has tried to get out in front of Bush. Clinton's array of foreign-policy advisers covers the spectrum of opinion among Democrats. Another purpose of the foreign-policy speeches—Clinton gave one last week charging that Bush was more interested in coddling leaders he knew than in promoting democracy—is to pick up votes among ethnic groups that supported Ronald Reagan because of his strong stand against Communism. A Clinton aide says, "A lot of these people are middle-class, and now that the Cold War is over they're ready to support a Democrat." These people represent key voting blocs in the Middle West—Illinois, Ohio, and Michigan—as well as in Pennsylvania. Clinton's muscular statements about the Yugoslav tragedy were intended, among other things, to appeal to the large Croat population in the United States. A Clinton adviser says also that émigré groups don't like it when Bush talks about the collapse of Communism—as he did in his Convention speech—without giving any credit to such people as Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa.

In both foreign and domestic policy, the Clinton campaign has been making a big effort to show the candidate as "a different kind of Democrat." The "different kind of Democrat" isn't a McGovernite (even though Clinton opposed the Vietnam War), won't let people become dependent on welfare (however unrealistic Clinton's proposal that all welfare recipients find jobs, or be assigned public-service jobs, after two years), and isn't hellbent on raising taxes. A Clinton aide says, "We'll stress 'different kind of Democrat' because George Bush's entire campaign is trying to make Bill Clinton into everything bad everyone has thought about Democrats."

The Clinton people insist that their

data indicate that the draft issue isn't hurting Clinton—that, in fact, people become angry when Bush pushes the draft issue, because they want to hear about the economy and they don't want to hear about Vietnam. The Clinton people make this case so aggressively that one wonders whether it's a "talking point" designed to get back to the Bush people, to discourage them from staying with the issue. A Clinton aide says, "The people who think he looks slippery about the draft think he looks slippery anyway." Clinton aides also argue that more people think Bush is lying about his role in the Iran-Contra affair; the evidence is mounting to reinforce something that has seemed clear all along—that Bush wasn't "out of the loop." But the Bush campaign has kept up the draft attack—Bush frequently mentions his own military service, with the comparison obvious—for a reason. In its focus groups of Reagan Democrats, the Bush campaign has found that Clinton's failure to serve is a big concern to about twenty per cent, and his not telling the truth about it greatly bothers thirty per cent. A Bush-campaign official says, "People say the draft issue is irrelevant. They said the same thing about the flag four years ago. It locks into people's consciousness. They say, 'He did it' "—avoided the draft. " 'Why doesn't he just say it?' "

WITHIN the Bush camp, some had been arguing for debates, on the ground that Clinton's standing there beside Bush would underline Bush's Presidentialness. Like their counterparts in the Clinton camp, these people didn't think that Clinton had been outstanding in the primary debates, and believed that his wonkiness would begin to pall. The idea was to find something—anything—that would boost Bush's ratings above forty per cent. Though one of Baker's talents is supposed to be the ability to get Bush to stick to a theme, Bush's speech topics have been all over the place: the draft, the economic plan Bush spelled out in Detroit in September and then seemed to forget about, Clinton's record as governor of Arkansas, the "gridlock Congress." (The problem with Bush's attacks on the "gridlock Congress," both the Bush and the Clinton research showed, was that they suggested that the only solution is to elect a Democratic President, since no one thinks the Republicans will win control of Congress. Stan Greenberg, Clinton's pollster, said to me recently, "The biggest thing Bush has communicated is that he can't get things done." Bush has pretty much dropped the gridlock theme.) And then there was Clinton the Rhodes scholar, who got foreign ideas—including social engineering, which is just this side of socialism, which is just this side of Communism—at Oxford. This subtle Red-baiting, combined with a streak of nativism, proceeds on some erroneous assumptions, but it recurred in many Bush speeches. In Enid, Oklahoma, last month, he said Clinton was a social engineer who wanted to go back to the kind of government controls that had failed "from Warsaw to Prague to Moscow." A Bush-campaign official says that the Oxford/social-engineering theme did hit home, and would be repeated.

This week, of course, Bush reached for full demagoguery—actual McCarthyism—when, in an appearance on "Larry King Live" (where much of this campaign has taken place), he insinuated that Clinton had been up to suspicious things during a trip to Moscow in 1969, and criticized him for taking part in anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in London, while he was a student at Oxford, and he urged Clinton to "come clean" about the trip. This bit of muck followed a not unfamiliar path in Republican campaigns: a raising of the subject by right-wing congressmen, a stirring of the pot by the campaign organization (faxes have been spewing forth), with help from the right-wing Washington *Times*—and then the President talking about it so that it's given the widest currency. The right-wing congressmen, who had been raising questions about Clinton's trip—and (admittedly) speculating aloud as to its implications, and suggesting sinister possibilities—during the "Special Orders" period when the House's business is over, kept Bush-campaign chairman Robert Teeter informed about what they were saying in their speeches, and met with Bush on Monday. Clinton hasn't helped himself by, once again, telling a story at

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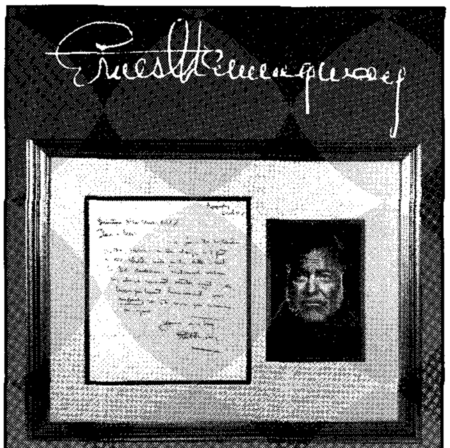

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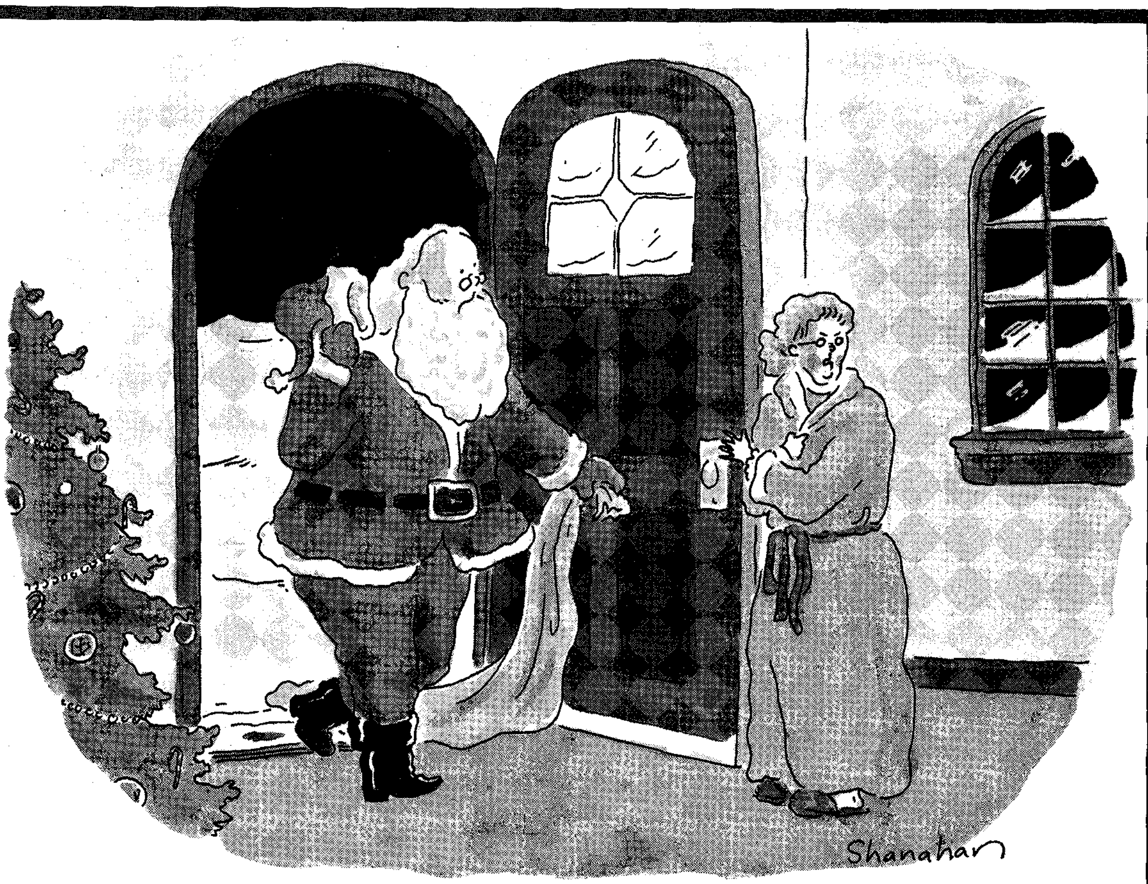
variance with what others say—in this case, about his stop in Oslo en route to Moscow—and by saying that he doesn't remember what he did in Moscow. (Several Rhodes scholars, as well as a number of other Americans, travelled to Moscow during that time.) He's been inconsistent in what he's said about his role in the antiwar movement. Nonetheless, Bush's charges document the fact that he meant it when he said he'd do anything to get reëlected; they also suggest that there is more dirt to come—unless public reaction against this episode is too great. The current word within the Bush camp is that he should keep up the talk about the antiwar demonstrations but drop the talk about the trip to Moscow. Bush is reaching back to some dark strains in our political past—anti-intellectualism and appeals to paranoia. (This latest Bush-campaign gambit seemed modelled on a smear tactic employed in British Prime Minister John Major's come-from-behind victory in April. The Bush people admire, and wish to emulate, Major's victory, and have met with its architects.)

BAKER'S debate ploy came just as a number of journalists' fingers were ready to tap out "What's so great about Jim Baker?" stories. Baker's candidate has looked frantic in recent days. His fly-around, a couple of weeks ago, in six states bordering Arkansas—ostensibly to give focus to his attacks on Clinton's record—revealed the campaign's concern for states that Bush should have long since locked up. In one week, Bush went twice to Oklahoma, a state the Democrats haven't carried in a Presidential race since 1964. Despite all the buildup of the President's economic speech, according to both Bush and Clinton aides, few people know that the President has a plan. But a Bush victory, a Bush-campaign official says, requires that the debate get off the state of the economy and onto the difference between Bush's and Clinton's economic plans. The striking similarity between them is that neither one adds up, but there is, in fact, a sharp philosophical difference. Bush would cut taxes (a little bit), while Clinton would raise them on the wealthy and lower them on the middle class (but Clinton is for some tax cuts on business to spur economic growth); Clinton is for deeper cuts in the Pentagon budget and for more "investment" in programs, such as education, infrastructure, technology, and research—all of which he says would lead to economic growth.

Despite the fact that Bush lags about ten points behind Clinton in most polls, and despite Clinton's commanding lead in the electoral college, Bush's position may not be hopeless—though it is perilous indeed. The case for a Bush victory, as his advisers describe it, is that he needs only to lift himself by five or so points to have a neck-and-neck race, and once his over-all numbers are higher his position in the electoral college will improve. Though the Bush people don't admit it publicly, they have given up on California, which has the most electoral votes (fifty-four). Even Ross Perot's rëentry into the race doesn't appear to make California retrievable. Bush has very narrow shoals to negotiate in order to win an electoral-college victory.

Perot's reëntry is a two-edged sword for the Bush campaign. He makes it more difficult for Bush to climb above forty per cent. Though the Bush people dispute this, Perot could make it impossible for Bush to win Texas and Florida, both of which are essential for victory. Right now, at the current margins between the two major candidates, Perot doesn't cost Clinton any important state. (Perot's poll numbers haven't risen significantly since he reëntered the race, and the polls register a lot of displeasure with his in-again-out-again performance.) Nevertheless, Perot's reëntry could create the confusion Baker was seeking—anything that might change the dynamic of the race. (Baker's two private meetings with Perot before Perot's reëntry are the source of much speculation here.) If Perot entered, it was in the Bush camp's interest to drive up Perot's numbers, so that he could cut into Clinton's lead in several of the major industrial states. But all this depends on the Bush campaign's being able, as one official put it, to "lift the water table."

THE Bush camp's intense scrutiny of swing voters has yielded the information, Bush advisers say, that these people no longer think that Clinton is an agent of "change," or that he will make things better, but simply that he's just different from Bush. According to a



"You smell like a chimney."

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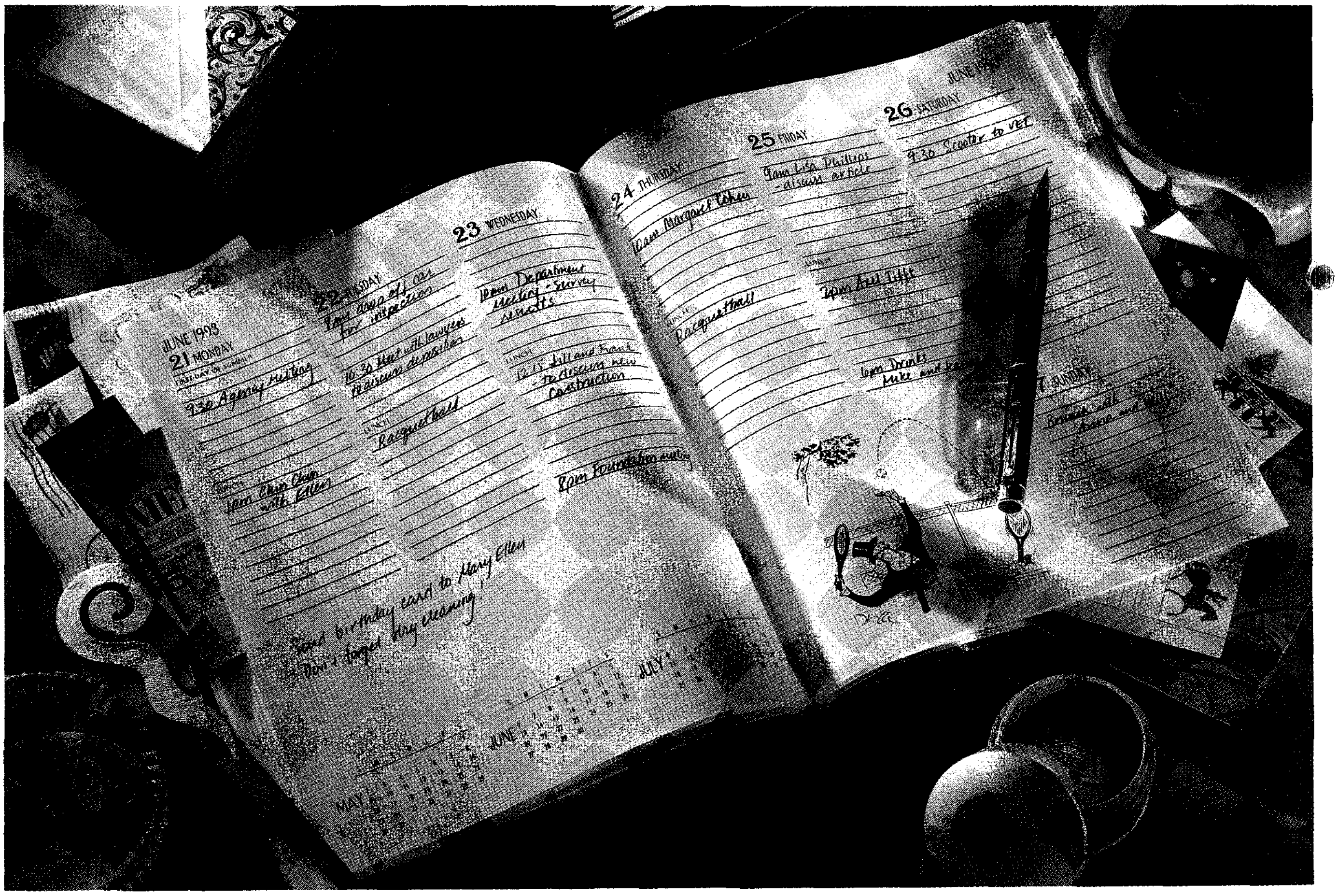
JUNE 1993
21 MONDAY
22 TUESDAY
23 WEDNESDAY
24 THURSDAY
25 FRIDAY
26 SATURDAY
9:30 Agency Meeting
Take car off car for inspection
10:30 Meet with lawyer to discuss deposition
Racquetball
10am Department meeting - Survey results
12:15 Jill and Frank - to discuss new construction
8pm Foundation meeting
9:30 Scooter to vet
Racquetball
Send birthday card to Mary Ellen
Don't forget dry cleaning
MAY
JUNE
JULY

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Bush adviser, some thirty per cent of the interviewees think that Clinton would make things worse. The Bush ad, based on bogus assumptions, featuring supposedly precise amounts by which Clinton's economic program "could" raise a middle-class worker's taxes—eleven hundred and ninety-one dollars for sales reps—fit the strategy of portraying Clinton as a risk as well as a taxer. A recent Bush ad portrays Clinton changing positions, or taking ambiguous positions, on various matters: the Persian Gulf, term limits for members of Congress, the draft. At the same time, Bush was making the point from the stump. This week, he spoke of "Clintonesia," the symptoms of which, he said, are "weak knees, sweaty palms, and an incredible desire to say anything on all sides of every issue."

Such rhetoric, plus the questioning of Clinton's patriotism, reflects the Bush camp's analysis of the way—the only way—Bush can win, as his political situation continues to deteriorate. Bush is in awful shape among independents, and moderate Republican women; his standing among suburbanites—key to this election—is dangerously low. Some of this trouble started before the Republican Convention, but it certainly was reinforced by that calamity, now such a certified disaster that Baker aides have made it clear to the press—not for attribution, of course—that they and their leader had nothing to do with it. (Some people, in and out of the campaign, blame Baker for going fishing before the Convention. But Baker has a nearly unblemished record for separating himself from disasters. Some people think that this is why, though he is at the center of things at the White House, he has remained all but invisible to the public.)

BOTH camps say that they had no choice but to traipse to Dallas, as they did on September 28th, to make their pitch to Ross Perot and his "volunteers." Each thought the other might go, and bid for the support of Perot's people. Some Clinton people even hoped that Perot might not reënter and reclaim some of the "change" vote that had come their way when he pulled out last July. Gore even hinted publicly that Perot might have a role in a Clinton Administration. The demeaning spectacle added to the preposterousness that has characterized Perot's venture all along. For those who didn't see it early, it's by now clear that he doesn't have the temperament or the breadth to be President; several people who had been close to him in the first round of his venture have publicly told us this. So he's back, to show us he's not "a quitter," inserting his inconstant whims into the most important political exercise this country goes through. That his presence puts more attention on the subject of deficit reduction—which he used to think could be done "without breaking a sweat"—is one benefit. His first thirty-minute commercial, in which he unadornedly—sitting at a desk with pointer and charts—explained the economic mess we're in, was oddly effective. That it didn't have today's much vaunted "production values" worked in its favor, and it got strikingly high ratings.

DEBATES are of mixed value to the process of picking a President. While they do give the country a sustained look at the candidates, debates—and the media's interpretations of them afterward—tend to reward wrong, or irrelevant, qualifications. A gaffe can decide the Presidency. The talents called forth—being quick on one's feet, memorizing the better responses, hiring the better writer of one-liners—have little to do with what we need in a President. The media tend to turn the things into sports events—stressing who won or who threw the most potent punch (which is often the best one-liner). The debates are measured by their entertainment value. The personality traits that come through and the public's reactions to those traits do offer something of a guide to how a candidate would hold up as President over time—but only a shaky one, and sometimes a misleading one. (Reagan seemed tired and confused in his first 1984 debate, and then in the second one his cracking a joke about Walter Mondale's age reassured people more than it should have.) But, for better or for worse, these debates will probably decide the election—if it hasn't already been decided. After the debates, there will be two weeks left—at the insistence of the Clinton people, who are, with reason, wary of last-minute charges—for Bush to pursue Clinton, and for Clinton to protect his lead. ♦

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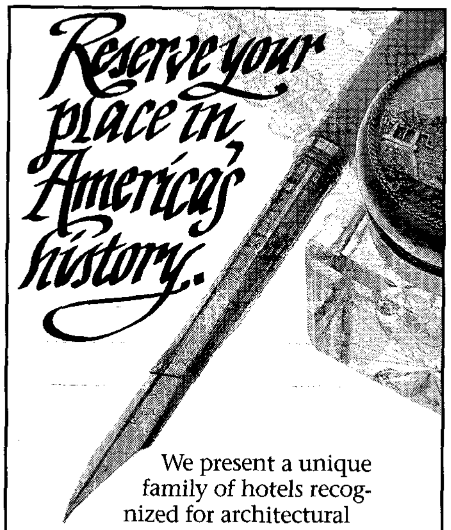

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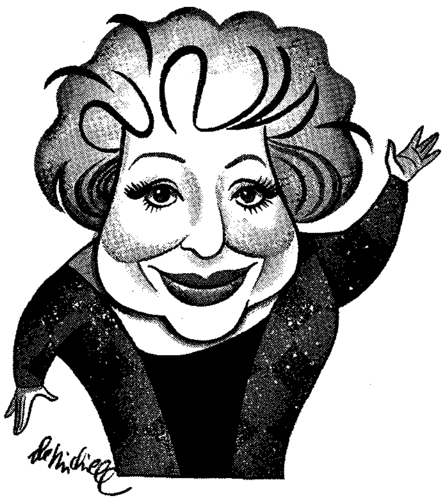
POSTSCRIPT

LAST SET

by Whitney Balliett

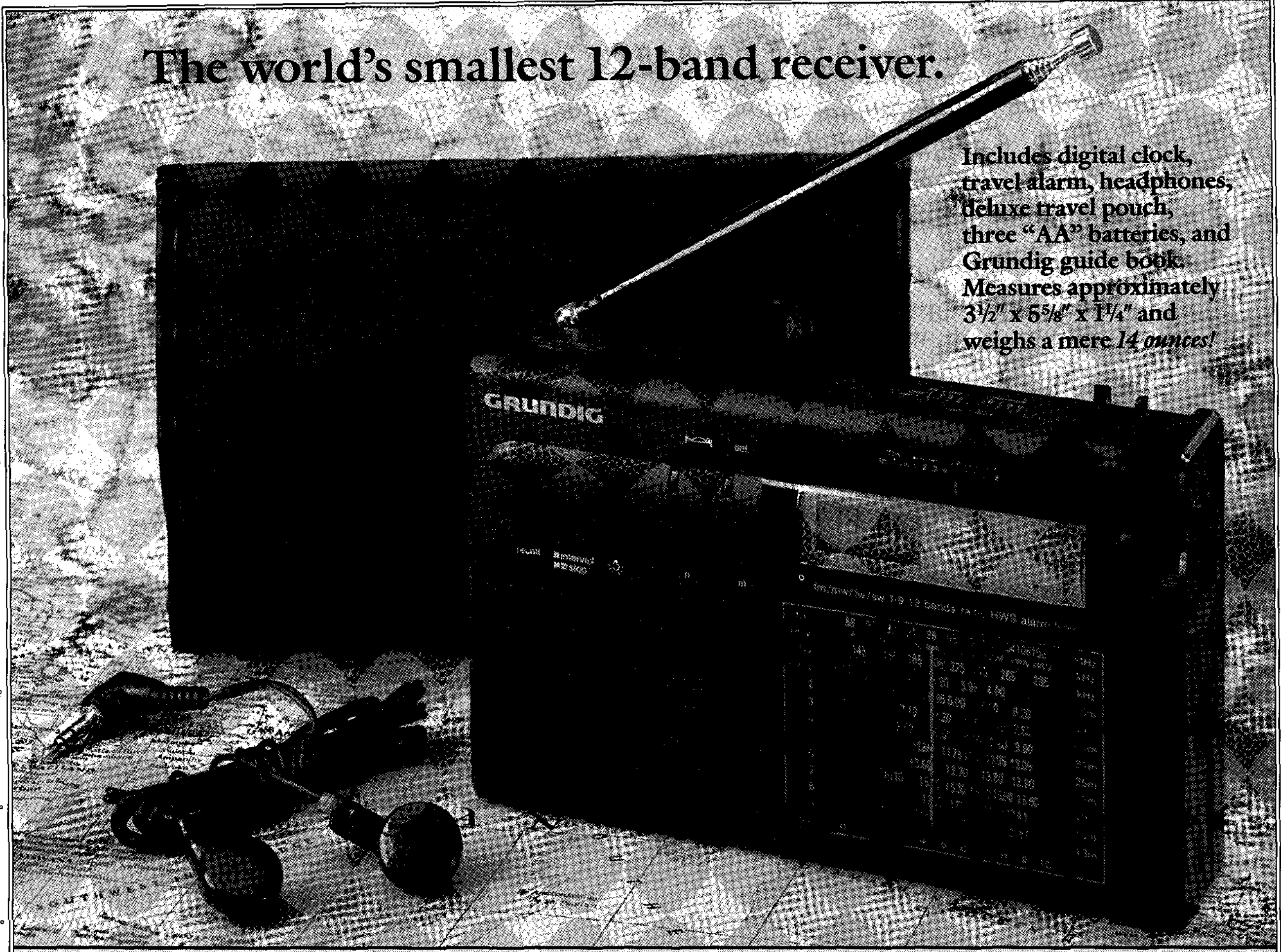
SYLVIA SYMS' final recording came out a few weeks ago. Called "You Must Believe in Spring" (Elba CD), it contains a dozen songs, all with lyrics by Alan and Marilyn Bergman. There are four Michel Legrands, including "What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?"; a couple of Johnny Mandels; the old calypso "Yellow Bird"; and Lew Spence's "Nice 'N' Easy." Her old friend Mike Renzi is on the piano, and Sylvia sounds much as she did in the weeks before her death. (She died suddenly in May, at the end of a set in the Oak Room of the Algonquin.) She had changed her style a good deal in the previous ten years, as she realized that her age and her physical difficulties (the partial loss of a lung, emphysema, asthma, brittle bones, dental problems, faltering hearing) were affecting her singing. Her vibrato, always pronounced, had got out of hand, and she was having trouble sustaining a melodic line. So she fashioned an attack that recalled the one Mabel Mercer adopted during her last years. (Syms used to listen to Mercer closely at the St. Regis.) She developed a swinging parlando, in which she pruned her vibrato, disguised her melodic lapses with brilliant dynamics, and placed her notes just so. Like her first model, Billie Holiday, she made herself into a rhythm machine. This revamping had a surprising effect. The emotion she poured into her songs seemed to double, and her voice, always an imperious contralto, grew enormous. Even at her peak, in the sixties and seventies, she was never as famous as Holiday or Ella Fitzgerald. She had only one hit record, an up-tempo version of "I Could Have Danced All Night," made in the mid-fifties. But she claimed that it didn't bother her, and she once said, "I have no desire to be a superstar. I don't think I could stand the responsibility of having to prove myself every single day. If you don't make it, you have a ball trying. But I've made it. I don't know by whose standards, but I've made it by mine. So the only person I have to satisfy now as far as my singing is concerned is me."



Sylvia Syms: Singing or talking, she invariably filled your cup.

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

She was born Sylvia Blagman, in Manhattan, of a Russian father and a New York mother, and was raised in Brooklyn. Her father detested her going into show business, and her autocratic mother, who died last April, just shy of her ninety-fifth birthday, never took sides—a response far more wearing than direct criticism. She got into acting when Mae West asked her to join "Diamond Lil," and she had sporadic successes on and off Broadway in "South Pacific" (she was a superb Bloody Mary), "Camino Real," "Funny Girl," with Carol Lawrence, and "Dream Girl," with Judy Holliday. But singing was her life, and she worked in almost every notable room in the country. The tenor saxophonist and bandleader Loren Schoenberg used to drive her to Brooklyn to see her mother, and the minute they rolled away from the curb she'd say, "Give me a line," meaning a line of lyrics from a song he'd like her to sing. She'd sing the song and say, "Give me another line," and she'd sing that song, and so it went until they reached her mother's. Talking was also her life. She frequently said that she talked too much—onstage,



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during her two marriages, with managers and club owners—and that she had probably talked herself out of being famous. Short and round, she had a wide face, an ear-to-ear smile, and a big laugh. (When a friend told her that she had named her tiny, elegant Siberian cat after her, Sylvia laughed and said, "Is she fat?") She liked to give the impression that she was a tough broad. And, in truth, she *was* tough. But she was also selfless, shrewd, eloquent, funny, and highly intelligent. Singing or talking, she invariably filled your cup.

At the Algonquin, she had put together a tribute show called "Sylvia Syms Celebrates Sinatra." (Old friends, she and Sinatra had coffee together on the phone every day.) A set early in her second week included over a dozen songs associated with Sinatra, among them Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer's "Blues in the Night" and "My Shining Hour," Cole Porter's "I Am Loved" and "Just One of Those Things," and Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen's "All My Tomorrows." It was a fine set—her slow ballads never stalled, and her rhythm songs swung. (She was backed by the excellent duo of Russ Kassoff on piano and Steve La Spina on bass.) In her dressing room after the show, attended by the young singer Daryl Sherman (just as she herself had attended Billie Holiday on Fifty-second Street fifty years before), she spoke out, as she always did. She had unaccountably never worked at the Algonquin, and she said she needed publicity (the house was only half full that night). She wondered what had happened to a piece she had been led to believe would appear in the Sunday *Times*. She also wondered why she hadn't had any reviews. Her eyes were too bright as she spoke, and she seemed distraught. Three nights later, after finishing a flawless second set (Kassoff said she didn't give him the eye once), she went over to speak to Cy Coleman, who had come to hear her, and collapsed. It was, she had often said, exactly the way she wanted to go. ♦

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CASUAL

ISSUES AND NON-ISSUES

by Ian Frazier

SUMMARY: In May, the American Prosperity Foundation, Inc., an office-based sampling organization, chose from a preselected group a smaller group, which it believed was unusually significant. Then professionals took that subset and divided it even further. At issue was whether an issue was an issue or a non-issue. On certain issues/non-issues, disagreement was so small as to be statistically negligible. For example:

ISSUE	NON-ISSUE
My taxes	Your taxes

So far, so good. Other i/non-i inquiries, while less clear-cut, nevertheless fell within an acceptable margin of certainty—

I	NON-I
The Russian Suicide Death Chair	Regular chairs

where acceptable certainty was taken to be a percentage greater than sixty-six, or slightly more than America's ninety-three million television households.

So far, so good. However, what were researchers to do in cases like the following?

I (NON-I)	NON-I (I)
"She's the Sheriff"	"Turner & Hooch"

If the first was designated an issue, although possibly not, in the judgment of many respondents, and the second was definitely not an issue except insofar as the first one was (albeit to a lesser degree), what then? The question seemed to lop the entire procedure off at the knees, and progress stalled.

Enter Nils Garrickson, a twenty-five-year-old wunderkind trained in the emerging science of cybernetics.

Unfortunately, he was fired, leaving us right back at square one. Then they brought in somebody else, Tom somebody. He also got fired. Then they brought in Marcie, who was more or less kicked upstairs from Accounting. What she did, first off, was to go through all the non-issues and take a whole new look just at them. She found, to her surprise, that many did not strictly qualify as non-issues at all, but included a sprinkling of pseudo-issues, sub-issues, secondary issues, meta-issues, and dead issues, as well as one or two real serious issues that had somehow been misfiled. Now we were getting somewhere. Printouts of the new, culled list of non-issues were issued to every department head. Marcie's managerial style was hands-on, direct, and at times confrontational. Part Welsh, part Greek, with a slight mustache and a big, strapping form, she got the most from her smaller male associates. First off, she established a standard of "i/non-i-ness," based on the following model:

I	NON-I
Golf junkets	Miniature-golf junkets

Later quantifying the standard by means of a simple algebraic formula (included in work sheet), she received the Nobel Prize.

At the time, my department was working on an issue for which we had not yet found a corresponding non-issue:

I	NON-I
Sex in the workplace	?

I had run through all the non-i tables without success, and Marcie was becoming impatient. One Easter I stayed over just to get some hours to myself on the computer. Monday morning rolled around and I hadn't had a chance to go home and shower. Suddenly it hit me! I ran into Marcie's office. She was watering her plants. She'd just arrived. Puzzled, she looked up as I scrawled on her blackboard:

I	NON-I
Sex in the workplace	Sex in the fireplace

Marcie plugged the coördinates into her formula—and, sure enough, they checked out. We examined our figures again and again to make absolutely certain. Overjoyed, we reviewed my data

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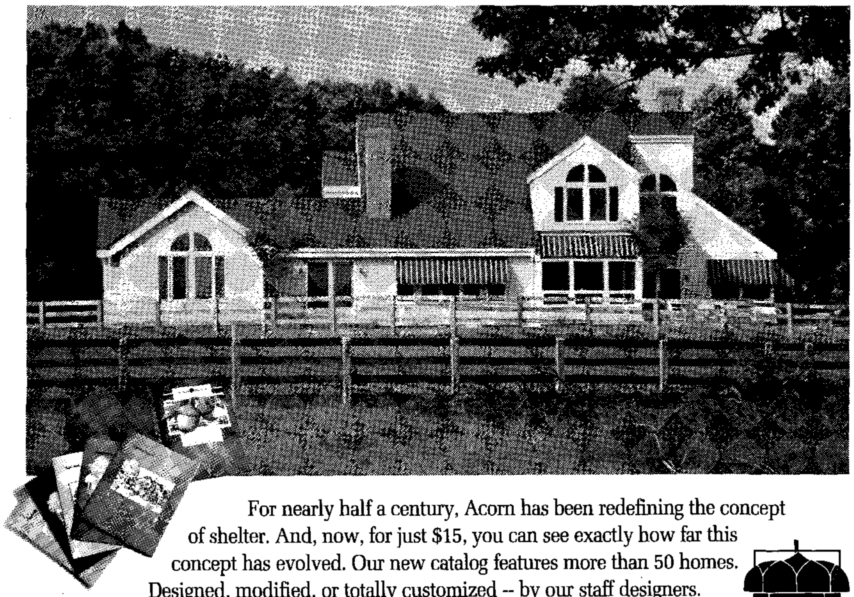

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sheets to see if they contained any discoveries that might be patentable, and we found plenty.

From then on, everything seemed to happen at once. Funding poured in. People had been waiting for a system that could reliably provide non-issues for any issues that came up, and vice versa. Now we had that system in place, with an exclusive seventeen-year license worldwide. In short order, we were able to engineer the following i/non-i couplings:

I	NON-I
Scofflaw diplomats	Diplomats in general
No-show jobs	Seldom-show jobs
The B-1 bomber	The B-flat bomber
Young Elvis, old Elvis	Old Elvis, dead Elvis

Each of these produced revenues for the foundation well in excess of thirty-five hundred dollars. Everyone began to look forward to going to work in the mornings. Staffers took each other out to lunch and splurged on health insurance. Every day, it seemed like, someone was coming up with a new "eureka" and shooting off a Roman candle in the commissary.

THEN, one afternoon just before quitting time—we'd been getting along so well, and our system was working so beautifully!—Marcie fired me. The first thought that ran through my mind was, Never sleep with someone from the office! Of course, I hadn't slept with anyone, but that was small comfort now. As she turned to leave my cubicle and stepped into the hall, someone fired her. Then the guy who fired her heard his phone ringing and, when he picked it up, learned he had been fired. I cleaned out my desk and fired some people and went home, only to find a message on my machine from Personnel telling me I'd been rehired. But that turned out to be an error: the next day I received official notification that I'd been fired.

Naturally, the stage was now set for Nils Garrickson, Part Two. He was calling himself Nilsa and was taking a whole new approach. Apparently he/she had obtained some funds for a business to warehouse closed issues which technicians would then attempt to reopen.

NilsCo offered me a flat daily rate, no benefits, everything off the books. Some of the issues I was working with were so closed that I was forced to resort to procedures which were bad science, even dangerous. Once or twice I managed to turn a closed issue into a fuzzy issue, but that was about it. After a few months, I quit.

I SAT at home collecting unemployment and waiting for my phone to ring. Meanwhile, the world moved farther away from the old i/non-i classical polarities in which I had been trained. Some would say that it had never conformed to our model to begin with, and perhaps they would be right. The rare piecework assignments I picked up almost never involved a good textbook non-issue—just issues that someone wanted me to skirt or talk around.

Now, as I look back over my career, I realize that issues versus non-issues, as an issue, is something of a false issue. We all get caught up in discussion of the issues, and we try to use reason, and it's such a waste. Our country is being destroyed. Focussing on our differences blinds us to an evil that threatens everything we've worked for and cherish. In addition, we must try to develop a new mode that defines issues less in terms of what they are not (or are). This can sound more complicated than it really is, if only we break it down, which can be done easily by someone with the proper theoretical tools. ♦

TOP GNU DEPT.

[*From the Northampton* (*Mass.*) *Daily Hampshire Gazette*]

PLAINFIELD — They are typical 13-year-old boys who like to fish, swim and ski, their mother says. This week Robert and Richard Pytko want to be fighter pilots.

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[*Adv. in the Hong Kong South China Morning Post*]

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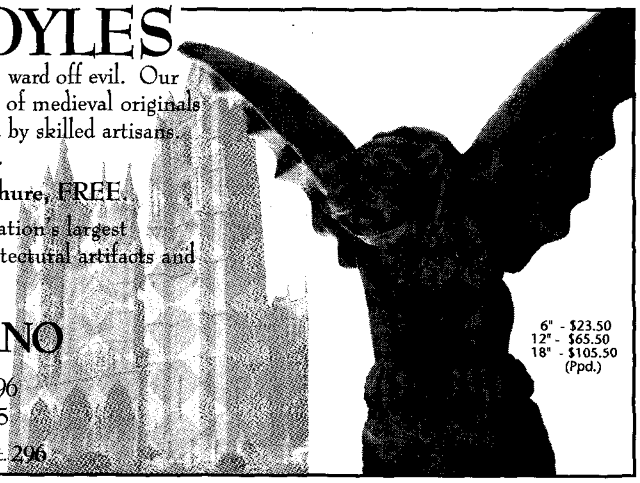
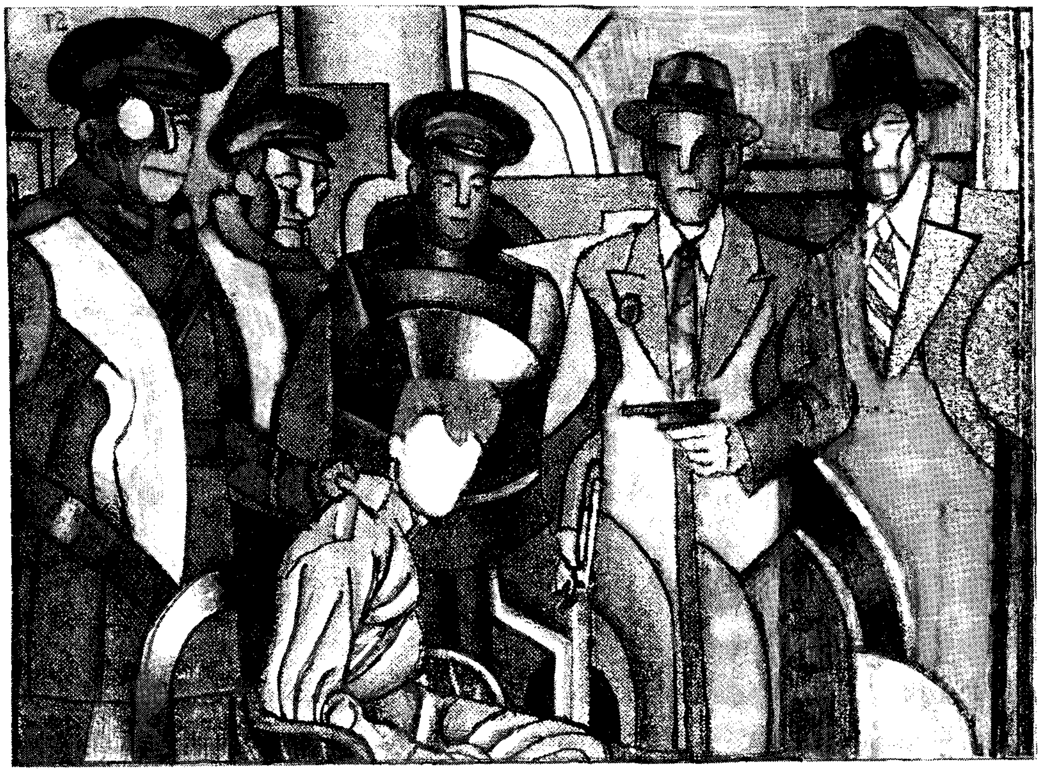


A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE VELVET PURGE: THE TRIALS OF JAN KAVAN

by Lawrence Weschler



SAUL STEINBERG

LATE on the morning of November 25, 1989, a clean-shaven forty-three-year-old man travelling under a British passport in the name of I. M. James tried to pass Czech customs at the Prague International Airport. At the time, Prague was rapidly approaching the climax of its Velvet Revolution. The ancien régime was still clinging to power, however, if only barely, and, James's disguise notwithstanding (he had formerly worn a beard, and being clean-shaven *was* the disguise), the customs people were not fooled. James was escorted from the line and led to an empty office—or such, anyway, is his own account of what then happened. In a few hours, a team of agents arrived from the downtown headquarters of the Statni tajna Bezpecnost, the Czech state-security apparatus (commonly known as the StB), and launched into a videotaped interrogation, initially in halting English, that lasted more than twelve hours. A few minutes into the questioning, the senior officer, increasingly exasperated, blurted out, in Czech, "You shouldn't be playing these games, Mr. Kavan."

I. M. James was, in fact, nonexistent. Jan Kavan, on the other hand, was quite well known. Twenty years earlier, he had been a prominent student leader in the days of the Prague Spring of 1968, and during the years since then, from exile in London, he had played a significant role in maintaining one of the indigenous Czech oppositionist movement's most effective lifelines. To begin with, he had managed to establish a sophisticated smuggling operation, and for years had moved tons of books and records and journals and medicines and cameras and duplicating machines and printing supplies into the country, and then tons of manuscripts and manifestos and videotapes back out. He subsequently established the Palach Press Agency—named after Jan Palach, a young student who in January of 1969 immolated himself in Prague's Wenceslas Square to protest the apathy that seemed to be engulfing his once vibrant homeland. (Just prior to leaving Czechoslovakia, Kavan had kept vigil outside the hideously burned student's hospital room as one of his radical-student colleagues inside received the martyr's dying instruction—that the students should somehow convey to the outside world his plea that no other protesters attempt to follow him on this path: "Tell them to join you in a living fight." Kavan and his colleagues had then organized Palach's mass funeral procession and negotiated with the government over the precise wording of a public appeal to any of Palach's potential imitators, which Kavan himself then read over the radio.) By way of his Palach Press operation, Kavan worked relentlessly to spread an awareness of the plight of his friends and allies back home. Without letup, he nudged editors and journalists and human-rights activists and diplomats. He made a continuous pain of himself and of his homeland's situation. He personally translated many of the key documents of the Charter 77 movement and the rest of the Czech opposition into English, and distributed them, along with Vaclav Havel's seminal essay, "The Power of the Powerless," to which Palach Press retained the copyright. He co-founded the *East European Reporter*, a journal designed to chronicle the distinct evolution of each of the Soviet bloc's constituent regimes and of their oppositions. He helped forge links between many of those oppositions. He was a one-man clearing house of desperations and dreams.

At any other juncture, one would have thought, the capture of Jan Kavan would have constituted a coup for the StB. At that particular moment, however, the StB interrogators had other things on their mind. Their power seemed to be draining away as they talked. Around midnight, one of Kavan's interrogators returned grim-faced from an outside phone call with word that the StB had just been forced to release Petr Uhl from prison. (Kavan was especially elated to hear of the liberation of Uhl, who had been one of the most harshly persecuted of the regime's longtime opponents.) At length, grudgingly, the StB interrogators decided to let Kavan into the country. They warned him, however, that they would be keeping a close eye on his activities, and might yet pick him up again. "We wouldn't be doing our job if we didn't continue discussing developments with one of the main protagonists of what is currently going on," Kavan recalls the senior official's having said. And, in fact, they did pick him up once more, three days later, for a few more hours of questioning. But that was that, and within days—or so it seemed to everyone at the time—the StB had irrevocably vanished from the scene.

Except for that interruption, Kavan spent virtually all his waking hours in the weeks that followed in the company of his allies and colleagues at the Magic Lantern, a theatre that became the nerve center of the impromptu Civic Forum movement, which was directing the nonviolent insurrection against the government. Within a few weeks, Kavan was put in charge of international press relations (doing more or less what he had been doing, in part, all along), and within a few months he was rewarded for his years of work with a prominent slot on the Civic Forum's united parliamentary slate. He easily won election in his Prague district, and on June 27, 1990, he was sworn in, along with many of his old friends and colleagues, as a deputy in Czechoslovakia's first freely elected post-Communist Federal Assembly.

Whether because of the emotion of the moment or because his prior labors had wrecked his health, Kavan suffered a serious heart attack in the middle of the ceremony and had to be carried from the hall on a stretcher. He suffered a second heart attack two months later. His doctors urged him to consider immediate bypass surgery, but he had more important things on his mind: these were the days he had been living for, he insists, for more than twenty years, and, indeed, even longer than that: ever since the moment when, at age five, he had watched his father, Pavel Kavan, a dedicated Communist foreign-service officer, being dragged out of their home to testify in the hideous Rudolf Slansky conspiracy trials, which constituted the climactic and defining paroxysm of Stalinist Czechoslovakia.

Pavel, a social-democratic student activist from the generation of the thirties, had become a member of the Communist Party during his own British exile, following the Nazi seizure of Prague, in 1938. He joined the Party in part as a response to the rampant anti-Semitism he had encountered in the Czech Army in exile in France in 1940. At the time, the Communists seemed to be the one Czech party that championed a truly internationalist spirit; they even welcomed Jews. Pavel was feverishly active in anti-Fascist activities throughout his exile; in the meantime, he also met and married a young British schoolteacher named Rosemary Edwards. After the war, Pavel took Rosemary to Prague with him, but a few months later they were sent back to London, where he was installed as the press attaché in the Czech Embassy. Rosemary gave birth, in 1946 and 1947, to two sons, Jan and Zdenek. By 1948, the Communists had achieved full control in Czechoslovakia, and Pavel became a loyal apologist for the new regime.

The family was called back to Prague at the end of 1950, and one morning the following summer Pavel was dragged out of the house by state-security officials, and was then not seen for over a year—until, suddenly, he appeared as a key witness in the November, 1952, show trial of what was being called the Anti-State Conspiratorial Center of Rudolf Slansky. Introduced by the prosecutor as a "Zionist bourgeois nationalist and Titoist," Pavel proceeded to admit, in an unnerving monotone, that he had indeed acted as a key intermediary in the treacherous plot centered on the Party's General Secretary, Slansky (his wife's posthumous autobiography, "Freedom at a Price," includes a chapter that, reading like a concentrated version of "Darkness at Noon," details the succession of torments that eventually reduced him to such an admission); other witnesses implicated Pavel himself in various schemes to use his London base to smuggle into and out of the country various goods and documents detrimental to the well-being of the Czech nation. Of fourteen major defendants, eleven, including Slansky himself, were sentenced to death. (Almost all of them were Jews.) In follow-up trials, most of the witnesses received severe penalties as well, and Pavel Kavan was sentenced to twenty-five years at hard labor. (His young family, meanwhile, were forced out of their apartment, stripped of virtually all their possessions and privileges, and subjected to an endless round of petty and not so petty persecutions. Jan's teachers would regularly deride the boy in front of his whole class as "the son of a traitor.") Pavel was released after serving three years further in prison, but the experience had destroyed his health, and he lived only four and a half years beyond that. He died of a heart attack at age forty-five, when Jan was thirteen.

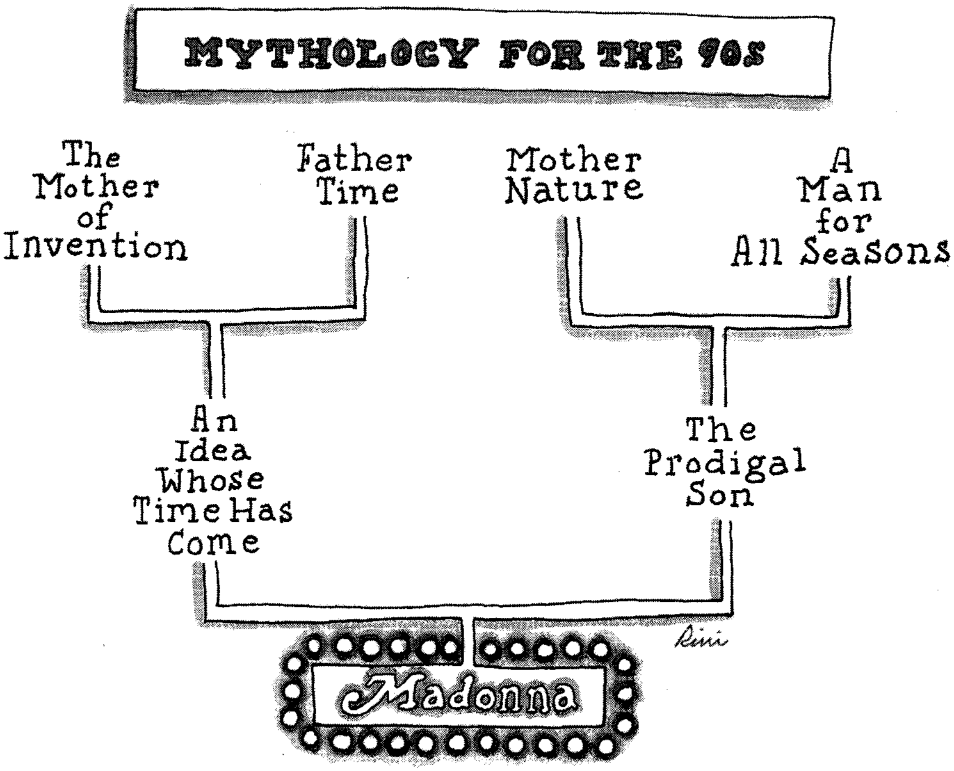
Jan Kavan has often remarked that from that moment forward he dedicated his life to avenging his father's murder (as he saw it) and to destroying the regime that had ground him down, along with so many others—a regime that he considered a deformation of the socialist ideal. All the while, he continued to consider himself a democratic socialist—which he insists is the only authentic kind—and he still considered himself one in 1990, though that put him in a decided minority in the new Parliament. Most of his colleagues had lurched wildly to the right, well beyond

Thatcherism in their embrace of the presumed curative powers of the freest possible free market. Kavan, who had lived through Thatcherism in Britain, regularly voiced his reservations about those powers, doing so with considerable force and cogency. In that regard, he came to be seen as something of a nuisance, yet his contributions to the Parliament's foreign-affairs subcommittee were widely valued and admired.

Meanwhile, he fell in love; after twenty years of having put his life on hold, he says, he was finally able to envision leading a normal life, with a wife and a child, a normal family. His bride, Lenka Mazlova, a Moravian student whom he had met several weeks before the Velvet Revolution at a Czech-Polish solidarity festival he had helped to organize in the Polish town of Wroclaw, and who had subsequently come up to lend him a hand during his Magic Lantern endeavors, was actually twenty years his junior. (People joked how he was taking up *exactly* where he had left off.) On the day of their wonderfully festive wedding, March 16, 1991—one of the first sunny days of the coming spring, as they celebrated on a posh restaurant terrace in the hills above the gently meandering Moldau River—she was, in fact, quite visibly pregnant. (A daughter would arrive by the middle of the summer.) Jan, for his part, seemed immensely content—more at peace than anyone recalled ever having seen him.

The trouble was, the StB hadn't just disappeared; it had persisted, like a bad dream from which the country was having a terrible time trying to awaken. People started looking back at those miraculous days of November of 1989, when what had started as a simple student demonstration managed, within weeks, to upend an entire era of totalitarian domination, and a worm of suspicion began to eat at the core of their cherished common memory: How could it all have happened so effortlessly, almost as if it had all been planned? Maybe it had all been planned. It *had* to have been planned. The StB itself—rumors were now running rampant—must surely have orchestrated the whole thing, starting with the conspicuously, needlessly bloody suppression of that student demonstration on November 17th, which proved to be the catalyst for the entire uprising, and which now, in retrospect, took on all the earmarks of a classic provocation, with one wing of the ancien régime (the omnipresent security apparatus, the StB) arranging to wrest power from the hapless other. Maybe everything else had merely been a shadow play.

A fifteen-member parliamentary commission was impanelled to investigate the origins of the supposed new order, and was named the November 17th Commission. As it launched its inquiry into the events of 1989, rumors continued to proliferate. Not only had the StB staged those seminal events, people were now saying, but it had also succeeded in loading the new Parliament with its former agents and informants—people who were either organizationally or ideologically committed to following the ongoing secret edicts of its hidden High Command, or else people who could be blackmailed into doing so. The new Parliament went through a sudden crisis of legitimacy, and, as a result, on January 18, 1991, an overwhelming majority passed a resolution empowering the November 17th Commission to vet the entire body; that is, to delve into the sealed files and registries of the StB and to identify any former agents or informers who were now members of the Parliament. Such individuals were to be confronted privately with the charges against them and allowed quietly to resign or else within fifteen days be subject to public denunciation. Kavan may have had some mild civil-liberties reservations about the resolution, but, on the other hand, as he said at the time, "I didn't want to sit in the same room with people who were guilty of denouncing my friends."



A month later, on February 22, 1991, Kavan himself was summoned to the commission's offices. Four of the panel's members were seated stiffly behind an oblong desk, and one of them—Stanislav Devaty, a man for whom Kavan had organized several emergency campaigns throughout the eighties, and whom Kavan regarded as a *friend*—informed him that his name had shown up in the files, along with a code name (Kato) and a sheaf of incriminating evidence, and that he was therefore being given fifteen days in which to resign.

Actually, Devaty told him, only a small part of his file still existed, as was true of the documentation on nearly all the leading oppositionists: most of the key files had been pilfered or destroyed; nobody knew how or when. What had survived in his case, however—more than five hundred pages detailing his intensive apparent collaborations with the StB in 1969 and 1970—was damning enough. For example, the file allegedly documented the circumstances of his initial recruitment, in the weeks immediately after Palach's suicide, in January of 1969, when Kavan had been detained on charges of currency violation as he was attempting to leave the country to continue a year's program of study at Oxford. Kavan had already been travelling in and out of Czechoslovakia for a couple of years by 1969, and everyone acknowledges that up till then, at least, he had been one of the radical-student opposition's most effective spokesmen abroad, both before and after the Warsaw Pact's August, 1968, invasion and crackdown, working in venues as diverse as London, Paris, Chicago, Berkeley, Budapest, and Dubrovnik. But on that January day he had been caught; his money and, even more important, his passport had been confiscated, and his Oxford education suddenly appeared to be in jeopardy.

According to the file, Devaty now asserted, it was on this occasion that he was first approached by an StB agent. This man, named Stanislav Patejdl (code name Pavlasek), apparently offered to grease the wheels for him—to free his passport and allow him to return to England—in exchange for his future coöperation and collaboration. Panic-stricken, Kavan had agreed to this bargain (or so it was alleged) and almost immediately after his return to Britain had dutifully reported to Patejdl's man at the London Embassy—the education attaché, Frantisek Zajicek (code name Zachystal). Over the next year, he had reported often (over forty meetings were listed) and thoroughly, providing detailed information on both his student contacts and the opposition's principal British allies, including such figures as the noted author and journalist William Shawcross and the student leader Richard Molineux. In addition, he had repeatedly acted to mute and, where possible, to subvert public demonstrations in Britain against the growing constrictions back in Prague. After the summer of 1970, the file petered out—nobody could say what he had done after that—but this, he was told, was all that the commission needed: his guilt had been established.

Kavan demanded to see the evidence and was told absolutely not—the files were confidential. He asked what sort of appeals process he would be afforded, and he was told none—the law made no such provision. He was simply being given fifteen days within which to resign quietly; otherwise his name would be read out publicly before the Parliament and the entire nation.

Dumbfounded but denying virtually everything, Kavan left the building and began calling friends. One, his fellow-deputy Petr Uhl, immediately launched a discreet investigation of his own. It turned out that the case against Kavan was nowhere near as cut-and-dried as Devaty and the others had led him to believe. The files of the Second Directorate—the domestic division of the StB—were in good order, and a fairly complete master registry of names existed in which individuals were relatively clearly identified as either agents or informers or subjects of investigation or, indeed, enemies of the state. (Whether such listings were accurate, what they were based upon, and what, specifically, they connoted—those were all other questions.) Parliamentary instructions implied that the November 17th Commission should focus its inquiry on the archives of the Second Directorate alone, and those archives included no file on Kavan. The commission's members, however, acting on their own, had expanded their mandate to include the papers of the First Directorate, the StB's foreign division, whose files were not nearly as straightforward. There was no master registry, and the individual files were peppered with mysterious abbreviations. In the Kavan file that they found there, for example, the designation "DS" had been written in beside the name "Kato," and nobody knew what that meant. The file itself was highly ambiguous: if it was read one way, it appeared that Kavan could not possibly have had any idea of Patejdl's or

"Sorry, sir, but the high-quality items you're used to are no longer made. We can only remind you of them, by charging high prices for the current stuff."

• •

Zajicek's true identity; if it was read another way, it appeared that he would have had to know.

The commission had apparently assumed that when Kavan was confronted with the charges he would simply fold and slink away. When he refused to do so, the commission was thrown into consternation. For a month, in high secrecy and with increasing urgency, the commission's members and Kavan and his trusted allies struggled over how to proceed. By March 16th, the day of Kavan's wedding, it looked as if the commission had decided not to denounce him after all. On March 18th, he was at last allowed to examine selected portions of the file—sixty pages out of five hundred—on the condition that he leave the door ajar and not make any copies. On March 21st, the commission debated the case until well past midnight; it finally decided, by a vote of six to five (with four members absent), to denounce Kavan.

The next day, Kavan's name was the fifth one on a list of ten names of unmasked agents read out to the Parliament by the commission's spokesman, Petr Toman. A few minutes later, Kavan approached the speaker's stand to deliver a speech, which was being broadcast live to a nationwide television audience. "I do fervently hope that at least some of you will be able to listen in good faith to what I have to say," he began—at which point thirty-five M.P.s stalked out of the chamber. He then continued, "I am not being condemned to eight weeks' or eight years' imprisonment but am being branded a secret-police collaborator for the rest of my life."

Kavan was almost forty-five years old—the very age his father had been when he died of a heart attack, directly brought on by the legacy of a remarkably similar series of charges of high treachery.

"SOMEONE must have been telling lies about Jan K, because without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning." Thus did I begin an op-ed piece on Kavan's situation, a few months later. I was not alone in making the Kafka allusion, and I certainly wasn't alone in writing an op-ed piece. One of Kavan's first moves following his public denunciation was to tap into the international network of contacts that he had painstakingly cultivated during his Palach Press years. If there was one thing that Kavan definitely knew how to do, it was send out an SOS. He's a Horowitz of the fax machine, and within days he had compiled dozens of testimonials from prominent foreign journalists and parliamentarians, who pointed to their own experience of his passionate effectiveness: the journalists Edward Mortimer, Neal Ascherson, Christopher Hitchens, and William Shawcross (all of whom also wrote about Kavan's situation in the press); and, among countless foreign dignitaries, Senator Paul Simon and Ken Coates, the chairman of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights. I hadn't known Kavan nearly as well as many of these had, but I had frequently relied on the Palach Press Agency's dispatches in my own work (they invariably checked out), and I, too, had in the past been the object of his occasional emergency harangues. (Most recently, it occurred to me, in the matter of two of Stanislav Devaty's hunger strikes, early in 1989.) Why, Kavan would typically demand, *why wasn't I paying attention?*

MONEY

My father and I argue over money—his loss,
my lack. We're cordial but furious,
angry over the way it's become love's broken shoe,
the hobble that keeps us from going far.
Neither of us gives in; each has a picture
of failure stuck in his brain. He remembers
his own father lighting kerosene lamps in the tenant house
they fled to when the Depression came;
I know what it's like when you're sick and the cash runs out.

In my mother's family, money sometimes killed.
At the reading of my grandfather's will,
where the children learned the farm had passed to the brother
who stayed home, my oldest uncle reeled in a rage
out of the house, caught a heart attack
like a hardball in the chest, and died.
My mother, who lost her mind twenty years ago,
sometimes calls this brother's name,
as if he's alive and they are children;
you can see how happy she'd be
if he walked into the room, sunny in the face,
as she remembers him, like a breeze
blown in by summer rain. The rest,
for her, is inexplicable.

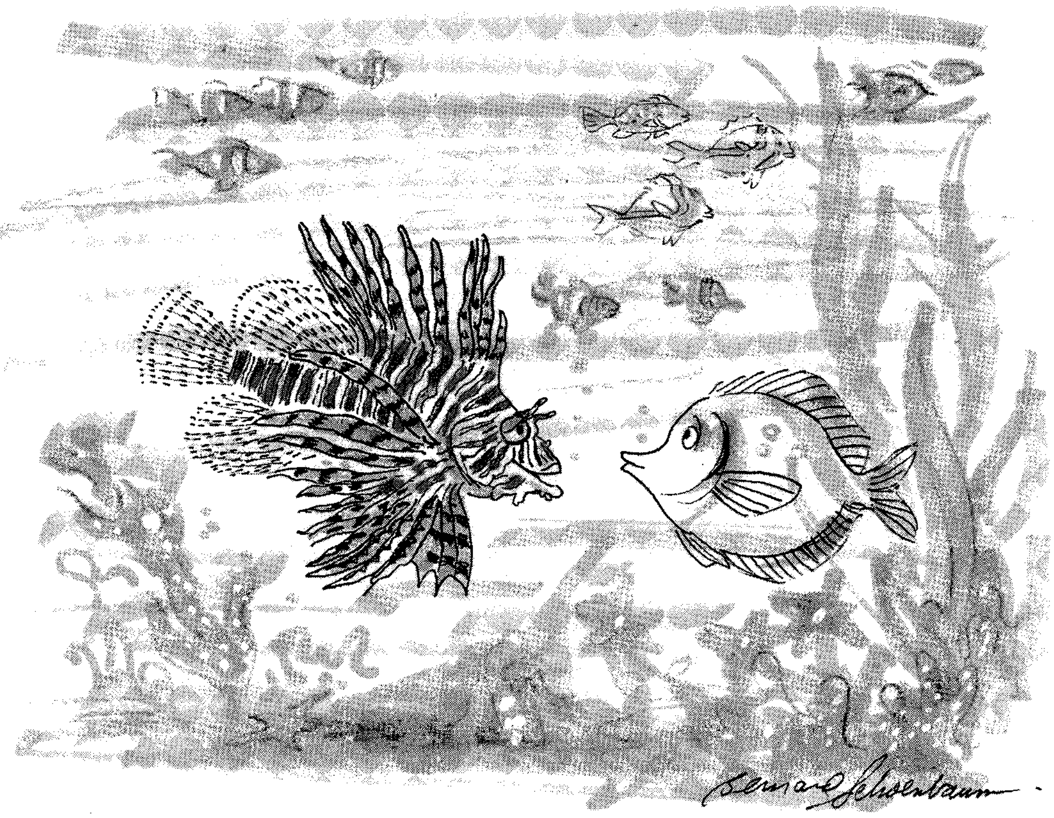
—Charlie Smith

In April of 1991, Kavan visited the United States briefly and called on me at my office in order to bring me up to date on the latest developments in his case. He is a short, mildly pudgy fellow, with a pear-shaped body and an oversized egg-shaped head, partly bald—slightly nebbishy—who somehow manages to present an aspect that is simultaneously sloppy and fastidious. He started out by recalling for me his vertiginous sensation upon first being confronted with the commission's accusation: "Suddenly, they were reeling off all these names. I recognized many of the English ones—these were my friends and allies—but most of the Czechs they mentioned I'd long forgotten, if I'd ever known them at all. Patejdl, for instance—I had a vague recollection of someone of that name identifying himself as from the Foreign Ministry who got in touch with me around the time my passport was confiscated, in January of 1969. But I spoke with a *lot* of people at the time, and I certainly didn't make any sort of deal with him, nor did I have to. The situation was resolving itself of its own accord; there were hundreds of similar situations at the time. Nothing was as clear-cut then as it appears today, in retrospect. Remember, the reformist Alexander Dubcek was still ostensibly in power—the Soviets had tried to unseat him in August after their invasion, but they had initially been unable to and had pulled back momentarily. Gustav Husak was on the rise, but even he didn't seem like such a bad eventual compromise at the time. After all, he'd been one of the Slansky-era victims—he'd even shared a prison cell with my father. Who could have foreseen that he would be the one to preside over almost twenty years of strangulating normalization?

"As for Zajicek, his was a name I did remember. You see, I was the leading officer then living in Britain of the S.V.S., the Union of University Students of Bohemia and Moravia—the association hadn't yet been disbanded—and, as such, I naturally had all sorts of official dealings with the Embassy's education attaché, intervening in matters like the visa extensions for my fellow-students and constituents who happened to be stranded in Britain at the time. Throughout that period, Zajicek presented himself to me sympathetically as a secret Dubcekite, and this was nothing unusual: the normalizing purges hadn't yet really begun, and there were still hundreds—thousands—of Dubcekites scattered all through the Czech foreign service, and probably even in the StB. And, in fact, Zajicek did end up being recalled by the late summer of 1970—so who knows? But, yes, our conversations occasionally ranged a bit afield, though I never disclosed any secrets or any information damaging to anyone else. How was I supposed to know he was recording everything I said for transmittal back to the StB, sometimes with considerable embellishment?"

Kavan declared that he wasn't expecting anyone to credit his protestations of innocence on the basis of his word alone. All he wanted, he said, was some sort of due process, a forum in which he could prove his innocence by calling witnesses and cross-examining his accusers. He said he was trying to get the entire file released to the public, on condition that the release be accompanied by his own point-by-point commentary. But the authorities were pleading the sacrosanct confidentiality of the files—all the while allowing out-of-context leaks of their own that were sometimes quite damaging. (All three hundred members of Parliament had now been granted free access to the entire file.) As his only apparent legal recourse, Kavan had launched a defamation suit in Prague Civil Court against the Interior Ministry, but the case had bogged down in the chaotic post-Communist judicial system. It was commonly being asserted that the only reason he was refusing to resign was sheer greed for his parliamentary salary, so he ostentatiously renounced that salary for the duration—a noble gesture but a relatively disastrous one for somebody in his situation, with a wife and infant daughter, no savings, and no independent income. He had begun receiving hate mail—most disconcerting of all (he pulled out some samples) crude anti-Semitic slurs and sketches. Moreover, he said, some of his onetime allies, even people who professed to still believe in his innocence, were now advising him to resign.

"This whole StB de-Communization business is now becoming terribly politicized," Kavan told me. He was pale and trembling as he talked. "The country seems to be heading toward a crackup. The Czech lands have made a clear break with their prior Communist *nomenklatura*—or, anyway, are trying to—while in the Slovak region the old apparatchiks, many of them truly terrible and corrupt people, have gained a new lease on life by recasting themselves as fierce nationalist defenders of various supposed Slovak prerogatives. Inside the Federal Parliament and the Slovak regional assembly, these people are hanging on and messing things up for everybody else. Nothing is getting done—and that is precisely their intention. It's an awful situation, and there are good people, some of them old friends of mine, who feel that the only way to break the logjam is to expose the long-standing ties of many of those Slovak politicians, say, with the StB—for many



"It's nature's gift, but with it comes a lot of responsibility."

of them do have such histories. Some people even think their leader, Vladimir Meciar, does, though I have my doubts. But, anyway, it's a key part of their counterstrategy.

"And here I am desperately claiming that the process behind such exposures is seriously flawed. So these good people come up to me, with great circumspection, and say, 'Listen, we realize that there has been some terrible mistake in your personal case, but can't you just let it be, can't you just quietly take the fall, *for the greater good of the country*?' And for me the terrible thing in such suggestions is that those were precisely the kinds of arguments that his interrogators tried to use on my father during his incarceration—how, yes, he'd obviously been a dedicated Communist, but how he should still sign this confession, *for the greater good of the Party*. And I just won't have it!"

Presently, Kavan returned to Prague. I wrote the op-ed piece, placed it in the Washington *Post*, and turned to other concerns. Calamitous though Kavan's situation appeared to be, it also seemed somewhat ludicrous. Surely there had been some mistake; surely tempers would cool, and the mistake would become obvious to everyone. The fever would subside, and Kavan would be allowed to resume his well-earned career. But that didn't happen. A full year passed—I heard occasional updates—and as of this past spring Kavan's situation seemed even more dire. There was obviously something here I wasn't getting, so I decided to go to London and Prague.

At the time, I was open to surprise, but I wasn't really expecting it. My expectations were upended almost from the very start, however, for it quickly became apparent that Kavan was a much more complicated individual than I had supposed—or, at any rate, one who provoked an incredibly complex range of emotions in those he came in contact with. His activities in 1969 and 1970 were the least of it; the very substance of his character, the entire arc of his career, seemed to be up for grabs.

It wasn't that he lacked for friends and supporters—particularly among those he had supposedly been informing on in 1969 and 1970. Many of them found the current charges against him preposterous. Edward Mortimer, currently the foreign-affairs editor of the *Financial Times*, recalled for me that many people in the British peace movement at the time, while they were willing to denounce the Warsaw Pact invasion of Prague, hesitated to denounce the Soviets themselves, for fear of providing fodder to more conventional Cold Warriors. "It's ironic in the light of the allegations he's currently facing," Mortimer said, "but I distinctly remember how Kavan was always one of those in favor of taking the most radical public actions within the context of the most explicit anti-Soviet line."

"Let's put it this way," William Shawcross told me. "Maybe Kavan was working for the StB all along. But, if so, then all you can say is that the StB itself would have to have been running one of the operations most significantly responsible for the eventual downfall of Communism in Czechoslovakia."

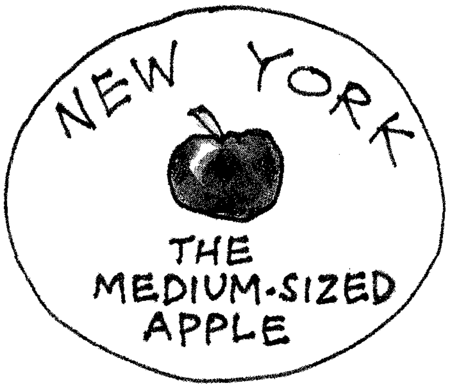
But, even while praising Kavan, people often portrayed his operation as spectacularly chaotic, his modest council flat as a perpetual shambles, and Kavan himself as cantankerous and difficult—at times, very difficult. "He had an uncanny ability to complicate and confuse," John Keane, a professor of politics at the University of Westminster, said bemusedly. "You're never going to be able to counter all the current unfair ad-hominem attacks on Jan with the simple claim that he was an all-around nice guy."

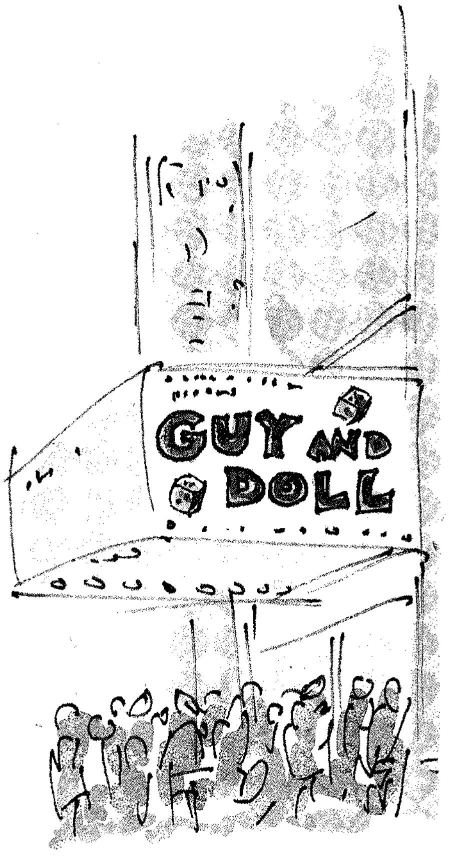
"He worked so hard that he resented it when others didn't, and he would always find something wrong," Joanne Landy, the executive director of the New York-based Campaign for Peace and Democracy, told me. "He was tremendously effective, but he was both relentless and ungrateful. And I *agreed* with his politics. Imagine if I didn't!"

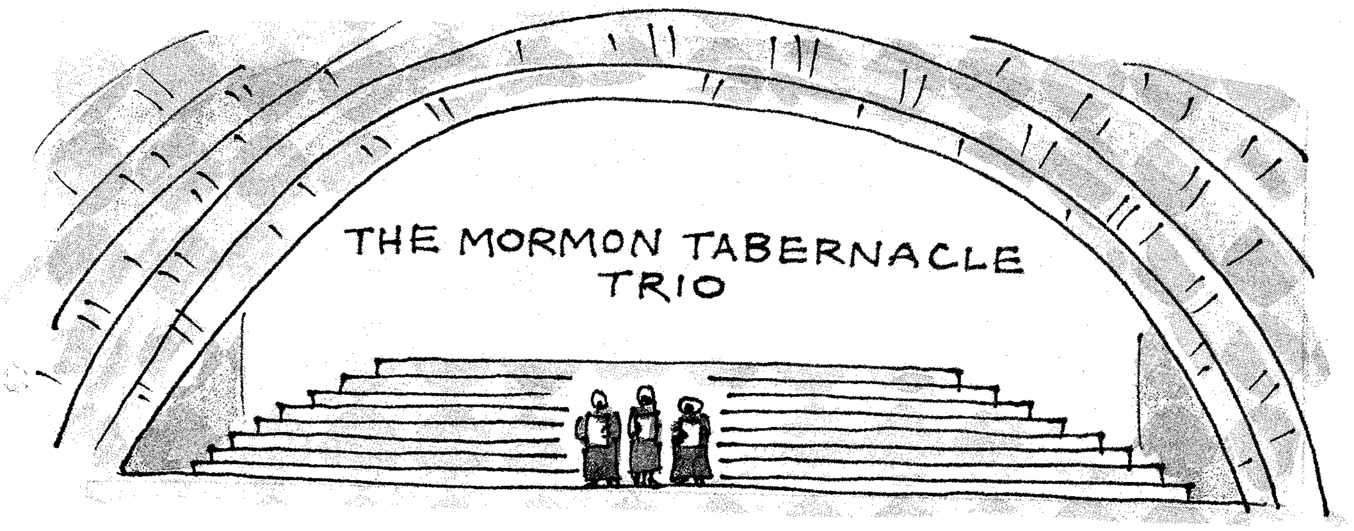
A good deal of the resentment against Kavan, both in London and Prague, had to do with those politics—the way, for instance, he tried to forge links between the Western anti-nuclear peace movements and Eastern European dissidents. "I was suspicious of him from quite early on," Roger Scruton, the conservative political theorist, told me in his office, at the University of London. (Scruton has a long history of pro-Czech activism through the Jan Hus Foundation.) "I never really thought of him as an agent, maybe because he looked so

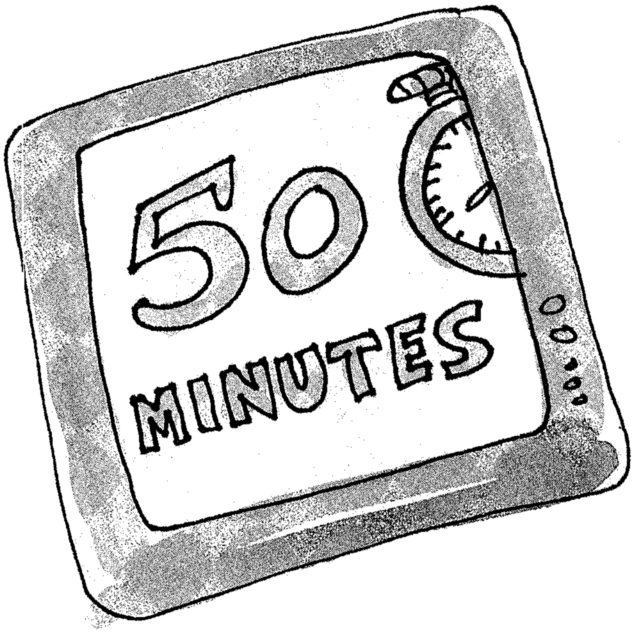
BLEAK PROSPECTS:

DOWNSIZING FOR THE NINETIES






THE MORMON TABERNACLE TRIO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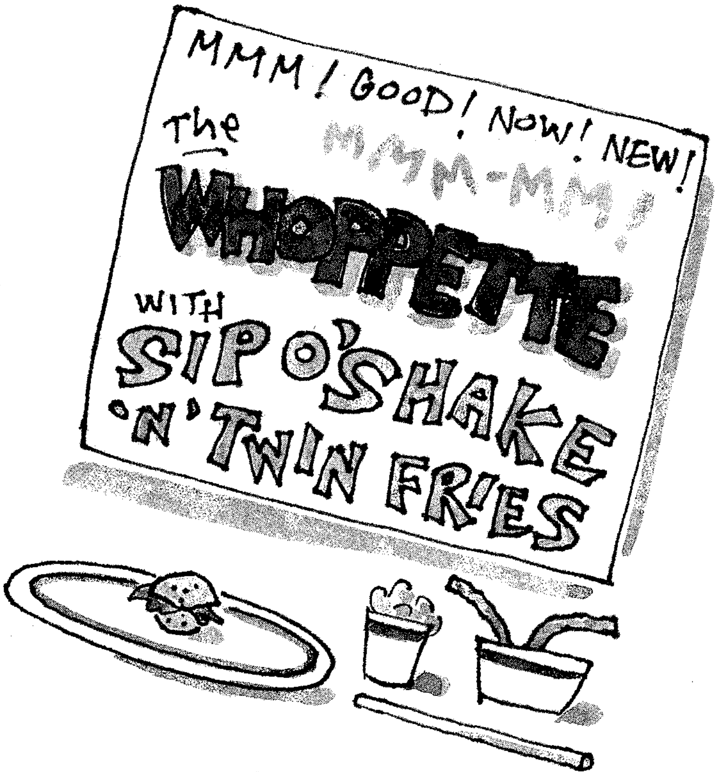
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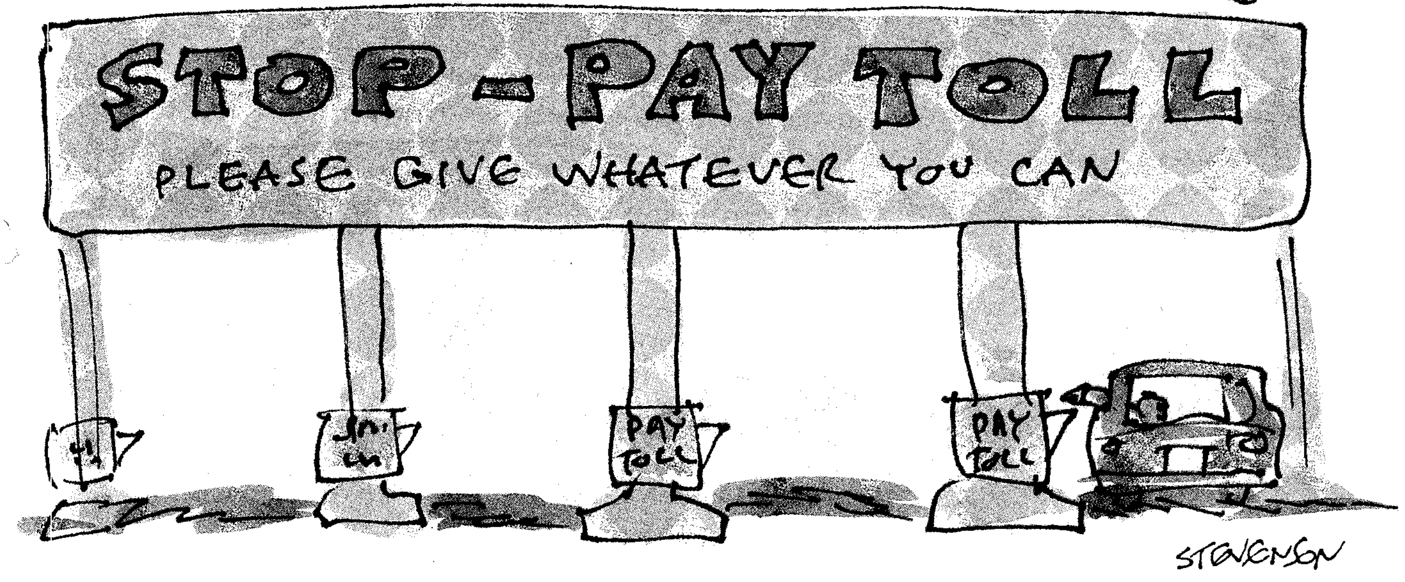
The MMM-MM! WHOPPETTE
WITH SIP O'SHAKE 'N' TWIN FRIES


STOP - PAY TOLL
PLEASE GIVE WHATEVER YOU CAN
PAY TOLL
PAY TOLL

STEVENSON

much like one and behaved so much like one, and, with his family's Communist past and all, it would have been too obvious. But his association with the peace movement never felt right to me. He would have had to know how it was linked with the K.G.B. and how furthering it here was furthering their goal." Kavan, of course, argued just the opposite—that only by uniting dissident movements on both sides of the divide could the mutually reinforcing cycle of arms race and totalitarian repression be broken. But his was a decidedly minority position among Czechs, both at home and in exile, and it made him few friends.

Kavan was portrayed to me as intensely competitive, and even vindictive, and almost maniacally secretive. The scene was littered with people who used to work with him but finally couldn't take it anymore. One of them, George Joffe, who had actively collaborated with him between 1973 and 1976, serving as both an organizer and as a frequent courier during the early days of the Palach Press, *said, "Jan had an uncanny ability at making* enemies. He could never tolerate others' knowing more than he did; simply because someone knew too much, he would begin to distrust, to offend, to conceal, until, finally, inevitably, there'd be some sort of explosion."

Several people I spoke with described Kavan as a pathological liar, and these were usually people who at one time had revered him. Jirina Siklova, a Prague sociologist who for years in the late seventies and early eighties served as the principal contact for Kavan's distribution network inside Czechoslovakia, told me that the Czech dissidents had always had a problem with Kavan. "He was doing terribly important work for us, but we'd get these horrendous reports about his operating style," Siklova said. "Whenever new people were getting set to emigrate, we'd urge them to get in touch with Kavan, saying that we knew he was difficult, but, still, what he was doing was so valuable and he was obviously overworked. And invariably the same thing happened. Everyone who went West from here would immediately fall madly in love with him. 'How could you claim he was so difficult?' they would write us angrily. 'He's wonderful!' But within six months they'd be writing, just as angrily, 'Why didn't you warn us? He's a monster, completely impossible!' I had the same experience with his lovers. He had an incredibly chaotic personal life. He'd send his girlfriends in as couriers, and then he'd get rid of them, but in the meantime they'd have fallen in love with Czechoslovakia, and they'd keep coming back. I had a room here that I called my private psychological counselling room for the former girlfriends of Jan Kavan—and, my God, the passions, the torments! And it was funny, because at times I'd find myself thinking, My God, what do they all see in him?"

One of his former girlfriends told me, "He had this helpless act—how he was so overworked, and he needed you, and you alone could help him accomplish this great thing, whatever it was. You couldn't help wanting to *shelter and protect him.* But then little inconsistencies would emerge, for no reason—stories of those who had fallen out with him and how it was all their fault. And then you'd just catch him in the most blatant lies, until you began to suspect everything. Some of that was unique to Kavan, but over the years I've come to realize that a lot of it is typical of Czech men generally. Milan Kundera got it exactly right—his blending of the personal and the political is the purest reporting. Theirs is a culture of compulsive compartmentalization and lying."

"Compartmentalization" was a word I often heard in connection with Kavan. He seemed to have dozens of schemes going simultaneously. (He was also said to have several illegitimate children, but no one quite knew how many or where.) The chaos extended to his financial affairs: his smuggling operation was continually on the brink of economic collapse, which he always seemed to avert by the narrowest of margins, and often in highly questionable fashion. For example, one disillusioned former coworker told me that somebody once donated a duplicating machine for shipment into Czechoslovakia, and somebody else donated money to buy a duplicating machine for shipment, and Kavan simply "bought" the donated machine and pocketed the money. This sort of thing happened all the time, the coworker said.

In all this, Jan Kavan resembled nobody, perhaps, as much as his father, Pavel—or, at least, the Pavel portrayed in Rosemary Kavan's autobiography, where one reads of a man who was likewise a curt, peremptory, ungrateful, and compulsively secretive workaholic (though not a womanizer). I tried this notion out on Eduard Goldstücker, an old friend and colleague of Pavel's, and he agreed that there was something to it, except that Pavel had been a milder case. "He didn't make these bitter, bitter enemies, the way Jan does," Goldstücker said. "With him, the pattern tended to get laughed off more often: 'Oh, that's Kavan for you—what do you want?' But I think there is something to this feeling you have about Jan, and it applies to many of the other children of that Slansky generation—they feel the need to somehow live out the interrupted lives of their idealized fathers. But they idealize the father out of all proportion, so that with Jan, for example, you get his father's deviousness wed to a scale of ambition that far exceeds anything his father ever aspired to—this sense of being a man of destiny, which is so much more explosive and dangerous."

George Joffe made a similar point: "I think Jan's case is all tied to this business of a young boy's enormously idealized father who, when he finally did emerge from prison, turned out to be quite cutting and dismissive, always belittling the boy as inadequate and a failure—as not living up to *his* own idealization of his son while he was in prison—and who then died suddenly. He accomplished so very much—but there was always a desperation in Jan. A frantic edge, as if he were always trying to prove to his father that he wasn't the failure his father had imagined him to be."

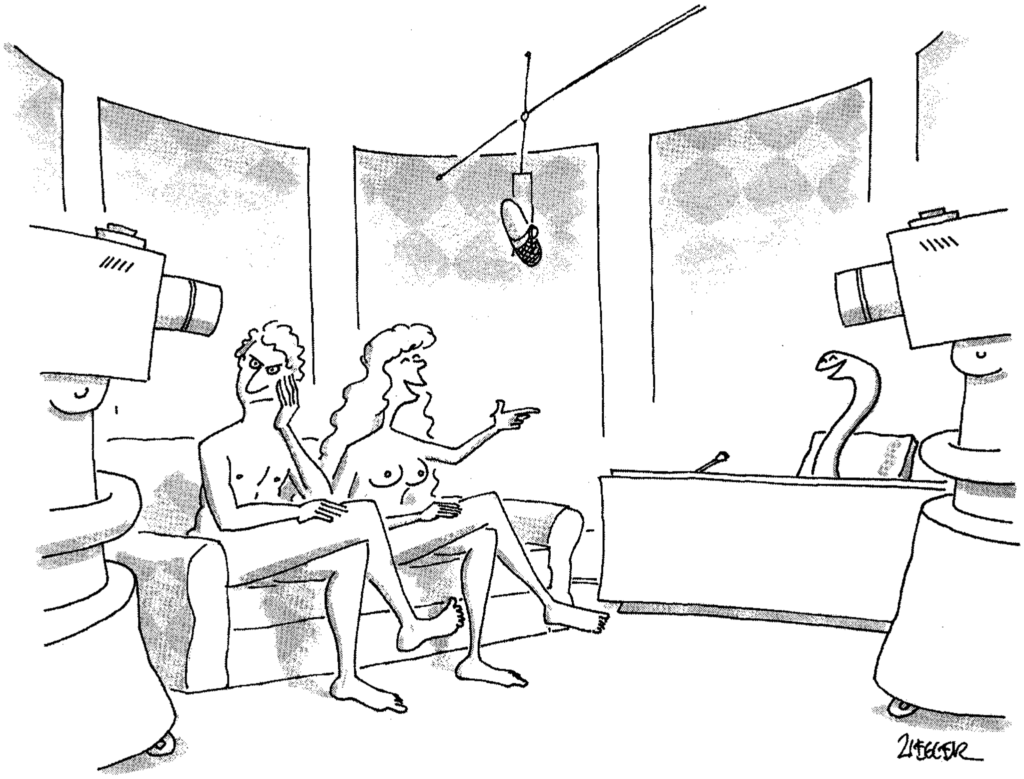
Kenneth Roth, the deputy director of Human Rights Watch, once remarked to me, "Kavan has alienated so many in the human-rights community by being such a cowboy. On the other hand, perhaps you had to be such a cowboy to get such good stuff." When people spoke of Kavan's "cowboy" side, they often mentioned his propensity for launching himself across the Iron Curtain, time and time again, under a bewildering array of false identities. I. M. James's descent upon Prague in November of 1989 was by no means an isolated instance. These forays inspired deep awe but, increasingly, profound suspicion as well, and that is especially true now, in retrospect. People asked how he could have been doing it so often and, it seemed, so effortlessly. He must have had intelligence contacts of some sort, been under somebody's protection—possibly under *their* protection.

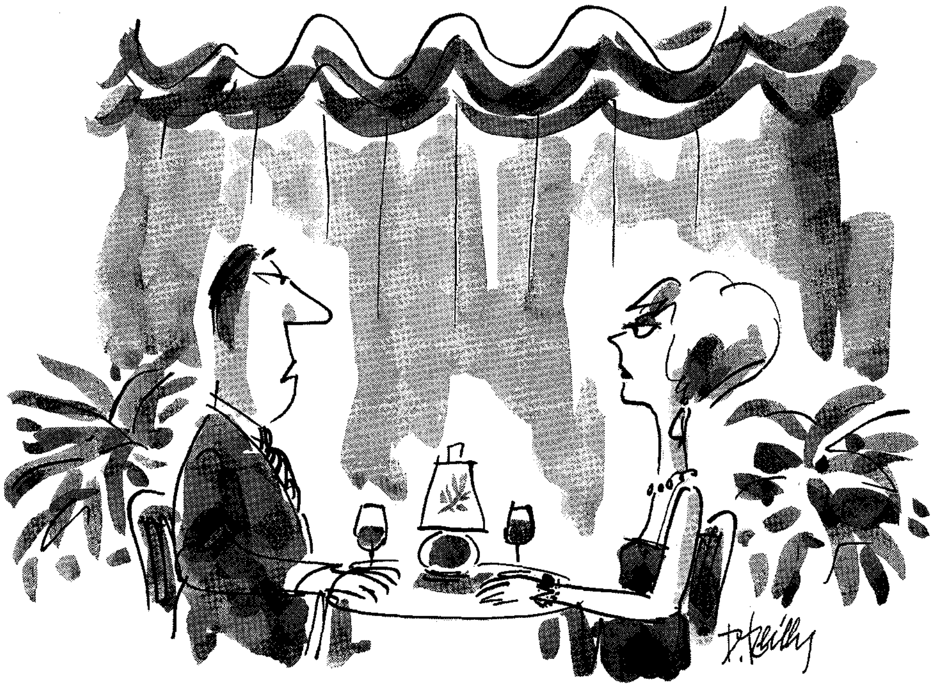
As my conversation with Joffe ended, he asked to make one final point. "Although I fell out with Jan and felt very, very bitter toward him for a long time—and, in fact, haven't spoken with him for years—still, I never suspected him of any of the sorts of things he's being accused of nowadays," he said. "He seemed to operate out of a complex set of psychological motives—almost as if he needed to make a sacrifice of himself. There's no way I can see that he was playing a complicated, cynical double game with the Czech secret police." He paused and then added, "Though he may have been playing one with himself."

CENTRAL to the controversies swirling around Kavan was an incident that took place in late April of 1981—or, more precisely, its aftermath. By that time, Kavan had successfully managed more than forty separate smuggling runs into and out of Czechoslovakia—an average of one every three or four months—using a series of camper vans specially refitted with secret compartments capable of hiding objects as large as duplicating machines. But one day that April the Czech customs police grew suspicious as one such van attempted to enter the country, and had it pull over to the side. Kavan's drivers, who were French, managed to ingest most of the private letters they were carrying on their person, but the customs people soon uncovered the rest of their cache, which included several hundred copies of Pavel Tigrid's banned Paris-based émigré journal *Svedectvi* (*Testimony*). Within a couple of weeks, the StB, using the incident as a pretext, launched a major crackdown on a significant segment of the Czech oppositionist underground. Among those arrested was Jirina Siklova, the woman who had been serving as Kavan's principal contact. Many of her domestic contacts—including such veteran oppositionists as Jiri Ruml and his son Jan; Jiri Hajek; Havel's wife, Olga, and brother Ivan; Jiri Müller; and Karel Kyncl—were detained as well, some briefly, others for an indeterminate time.

As the Czech propaganda machine began gearing up for what had all the makings of a major show trial, Kavan, back in London, grew increasingly frantic. He had been trying for some time to interest a young British television reporter named Julian Manyon in doing a story on his Czech colleagues. Following the van's capture, Manyon, taken with the entire sweep of the story, and especially with its aspects of clandestine derring-do, agreed to undertake the report. He travelled to Prague for some on-scene reporting (and surreptitious filming) and then persuaded Kavan—actually, who persuaded whom to do what became one of the many disputed aspects of this whole affair—to allow himself to be filmed flying to Paris, arriving at Charles de Gaulle Airport, and reënacting his original contact with his drivers. The result of all this was a half-hour program broadcast by Thames Television on June 25, 1981, under the title "The Last Roundup?" The program, which sympathetically evoked the desperate situation of the Czech prisoners, made for compelling viewing. However, partway through the program, in a voice-over narration that, according to Kavan, strayed from a previously reviewed text, Manyon declared in passing that the French drivers had "carried with them the names and addresses of people inside Czechoslovakia, contacts for Jan Kavan's secret organisation"—going on to state that these details had now fallen into the hands of the Czech police, giving them "enough evidence to begin the wave of arrests that they had been itching to carry out."

Kavan, shocked, erupted in fury. No such list or inventory of names had ever been in the van, he insisted, if for no other reason than that no such list existed, or could exist, since the whole key to the security of his operation was that





"Monochromatic people have feelings, too."

at any given moment he always dealt with a single exclusive contact and himself had no idea who constituted the rest of the distribution network. For good measure, Kavan swore that no lists whatever, no uncoded names of any kind, had been in the van. He said that any statement to the contrary not only maligned him personally—making it seem as if his carelessness had been responsible for the ensuing series of arrests—but also recklessly jeopardized his imprisoned colleagues, since the Czech regime would now be able to manufacture such lists out of thin air and invoke no less an authority than British television as a source regarding their authenticity.

Kavan's British friends urged him to let the matter drop. Yes, they conceded, some damage may have been done, but perhaps not as much as he feared, and, in any case, the documentary had done a lot of good as well. Yet an increasingly frenzied Kavan could not be assuaged. (In retrospect, perhaps the fact that his beloved mother was suddenly dying of cancer, and that this entire fiasco would come to constitute the last light in which she would see him, contributed to his tenacity.) He took his grievance to the *Sunday Times*, and in November the paper ran a banner story headlined "TV LIE," savaging both Manyon's documentary and his reputation. Then Kavan registered a formal complaint with the quasi-official watchdog Broadcasting Complaints Commission, or B.C.C. That suit, in turn, complicated matters for all kinds of people, notably including Pavel Tigrid, who knew that there had been at least one list in the van—a fact that he himself was already furious about. "I'd *told* Kavan," Tigrid said to me in his elegant office in the Prague Castle, where, after forty years of exile, mostly in France, he was serving (until recently) as personal counsellor to President Havel. "I'd *told* him not to include the address labels of the *Svedectvi* subscribers with the magazines themselves—to send them in separately, by courier. But he hadn't listened—you could never get Kavan to listen—so *that* list probably had been confiscated off the van."

Tigrid's knowledge put him in an especially difficult position when Manyon's lawyers came to him in Paris and pleaded that he provide an affidavit to the B.C.C. in Manyon's behalf. He managed to squirm out of the jam by declining, as a friend of the family and a French resident, to testify at all, but he resented having been put in the position. Tigrid, for his part, is convinced that the main reason Kavan pursued the case was that he had a "megalomaniacal" need to be the center of attention. "Honza worked like a dog and accomplished a tremendous amount," Tigrid told me, employing the diminutive of "Jan." "But the trouble with him— I've often told him as much. 'Honza,' I've said, 'your problem is that you want both to be the world's greatest conspirator and to be *famous* for being the world's greatest conspirator.' "

As it happened, the show trials in Czechoslovakia never took place, the last of the van-case prisoners having been released within a year. Jirina Siklova told me in Prague that Manyon's report had in fact never been used against any of the prisoners. She also said, "Kavan was in no way responsible either for the van's capture or for our subsequent arrests, nor did we suspect him. We now know who was responsible, and it wasn't Kavan."

Nevertheless, four years after all the van-case defendants had been released, Kavan was still pressing his case before the B.C.C. And, thanks in part to his adamant, sworn (and at the time irrefutable) insistence that there had been no lists of any sort in the van, the B.C.C. in 1985 did find in Kavan's favor, noting that Thames Television and Manyon had now conceded having made an "error of judgment."

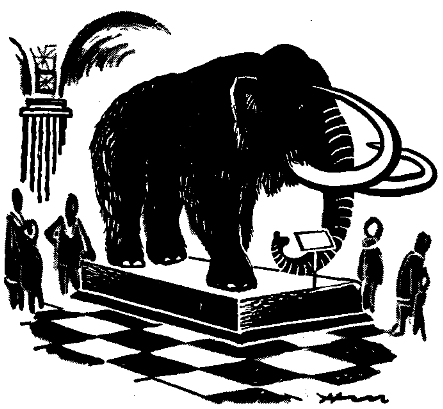
The entire affair did considerable damage to Manyon's and Thames's reputations, and, any concessions notwithstanding, Manyon was determined to clear his name. In the months after the Velvet Revolution, as Kavan himself came under suspicion in Prague, Manyon rushed to the scene and apparently developed contacts inside the Czech government, such that his lawyers were subsequently able to get the case reopened before the B.C.C., in part on the basis of freshly uncovered material from the original 1981 Interior Ministry investigation—records that included the *Svedectvi* list along with several uncoded, plainly addressed letters to various dissident figures.

When I reached Manyon, he said to me that his documentary had been "a model of fairness and accuracy," adding that Kavan was "a liar, a malicious liar who caused both me and Thames Television truly grievous harm over the years." He went on, "He accused me not only of being a bad reporter but also of jeopardizing the safety of good dissidents in the process. Those are serious charges, among the most painful that can be levelled against any journalist, especially when he *knows* them to be false, but at the time just can't prove it." Manyon cited Kavan's original letter of complaint to the B.C.C., which had concluded with the statement "If Julian Manyon was employed by the Czech Secret Service, he could not have done a better job," as particularly ironic in the light of Kavan's current difficulties. But then he doubled back, wanting to make it clear that the two questions—Kavan's role in the matter of the B.C.C. complaint and the question of his possible StB involvement—were unrelated. He might be "a liar of Munchausen proportions, which he demonstrably is," and nevertheless be innocent of these other charges, he said. But that was his problem, wasn't it?

DURING my first conversation with Kavan in Prague, I brought up the question of the Manyon suit. Why had he felt it necessary to dissemble before the B.C.C. by stating flatly that there had been no lists in the van? He replied that the gist of his complaint to the B.C.C. had been accurate, as his lawyers had once again told the B.C.C. during the most recent hearings. (The lawyers had in the meantime acknowledged the existence of the *Svedectvi* list.) Manyon *had* got the story wrong, Kavan continued to insist—whatever names had been seized off the van hadn't been those of "contacts" of any "secret organization"—and his lawyers were trying to get the B.C.C. to revisit the case on that basis. He claimed that he had been forced to behave as he did in order to protect the prisoners themselves, so that the regime wouldn't be able to bandy the *Svedectvi* list about as if it *were* a list of "Kavan's secret organization," and cite Thames Television as its authority. Fine, I said, but why had he continued to pursue the case after the prisoners had been released? "Because they could have been rearrested at any time," he said. "We needed that finding on the record. Beyond that, it's always difficult to drop such a proceeding halfway." And why had he put the list in the van in the first place, against Tigrid's advice? "It was easy for Tigrid to offer advice like that," Kavan said. "But that list—twenty-four pages of labels—was incredibly bulky. You couldn't just send it in by courier; it had to be hidden in a safe shipment."

We were meeting in the cafeteria in the Parliament building. We didn't need to talk quietly, because others kept their distance, with many of Kavan's fellow-deputies occasionally glaring at him across the divide. I asked him about the financial irregularities I had heard of in his operation—for example, the matter of the double-billing on the duplicating machine.

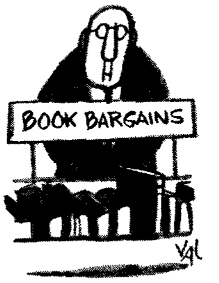
Kavan screwed up his face in distaste and seemed to squirm. "It's true that bookkeeping and accounting are things I dislike and have no propensity for," he said. "This specific thing about the duplicating machine—I really don't recall it. I don't think it's true. But I would regularly move funds from one project to another—I was always scrambling. You see, unlike Tigrid or some of the other active émigrés, I was refusing to accept any foreign governmental or intelligence funding, and as a result my circumstances were always desperate. People were always wanting to contribute toward a specific item—the purchase of a duplicating machine, say—so they could get all the credit, but no one wanted to contribute to the entire operation's overhead, which was considerable. There was the purchase and refitting and storage of the vans, the drivers' expenses, the cost of specifically requested medicines or technical manuals, and so forth. So that, yes, I can see how somebody looking at all this scrambling around from the outside might have grown suspicious. On the other hand, everybody knows how I lived in those years, the physical conditions I endured—and still do. I doubt if anybody seriously imagines I was profiteering for my own benefit."



I asked Kavan about his "cowboy" reputation, and, specifically, about his repeated breachings of the Iron Curtain.

"There's nothing mysterious about it," he said. "I needed to travel, regularly, to keep up my contacts with the various clandestine movements and to effect linkages between those movements, to develop sources for the Palach Press Agency, and generally to gauge for myself how things were evolving on the ground. And it happened that travelling wasn't all that difficult. Thanks to my being born in Britain, I was entitled to a British passport. And one of the nice things about Britain—there's a relatively anti-bureaucratic temper there—is that it turns out to be remarkably easy to change one's name legally and then to get a new passport under that new name. There's a straightforward procedure called a deed poll—a simple form, a five-pound fee, a few weeks' wait, and it's done. Oddly, or so I was told, you're allowed to change your last name as often as you like, but not your first or middle names, which are deemed to be 'God-given.' In that particular I was lucky, because a registrar who issued my birth certificate couldn't credit a boy's being named Jan and so inscribed me as 'Ian Michael.' " Kavan reached into his satchel and pulled out ten passports with ten different but technically legal names, with pictures showing Kavan in variously bearded disguises. "Actually, the first time I used this technique was in August of 1970, when—let's see, it was this one here." He showed me a passport in the name of I. M. Fraser. "And, as you can see, I went to Prague. I was having a terrible time trying to decide whether to return for real or to remain in exile. I was racked by guilt that I wasn't sharing more directly in the tribulations of my allies and colleagues here, but it was they who urged me to stay outside, to establish the smuggling channel and to publicize the country's plight. That, they told me, was where I could be of the most use, but only on the condition that I continue to take orders from them and to meet their needs as *they* defined them. This made sense to me, and it is what I did for the next nineteen years. For seventeen of those years, I didn't return to Czechoslovakia—I didn't dare to risk either their security or my own—but, as you can see, I went just about everywhere else."

We leafed through the passports, noting the visas and the stamps: Warsaw, Budapest, Bucharest, East Berlin, Sofia. "By Christmas of 1987, however, I was having an increasingly hard time withstanding the homesickness and the sense of separation, and I was feeling an incredible need to come back, if only for a visit," Kavan went on. "There were, of course, legitimate reasons as well—things I needed to discuss in person with my colleagues here. There's only so much you can do through couriers. I don't know—maybe it was the fact that my mother had died, and her mother as well, to whom I was also very close. No one was around anymore who would have been personally crushed if I were to be captured and thrown in jail. I didn't intend to get captured, and took enormous precautions, both then and on two subsequent trips, in 1988, the last of which I made with this passport here, under the name I. M. James, and on none of which was there any trouble. It was only after the last of those trips—at the end of 1988—that a slight hitch developed, after the fact: somebody let something slip during questioning on some other matter, and I was warned not to attempt to enter the country under the same name again. I'd been intending to go through a new deed-poll procedure, but, though easy, it does take several weeks, and then everything started happening so quickly, such that at the end of November, 1989, I decided to risk it, I came back as I. M. James, and sure enough, for the first time, they caught me."



The passports lay fanned out on the table before us. What was it about him, I finally asked—this talent for endless complication? And not just that but the whole pattern of seduction and disappointment that seemed to run through his life, his apparent genius for arousing suspicion and making enemies?

Kavan grew quiet and gazed around the cafeteria, and then, his countenance darkening, he said, "Of course I'm aware of all that. I'd hoped that I had inherited enough from my mother to combat it, but it's true that I seem repeatedly to exhibit patterns of my father's which I never liked. He, too, had a tremendous ability to lose friends."

I was reminded of a passage from Rosemary's autobiography in which she recounts Jan's returning from the airport that day in January of 1969 when his passport was confiscated and his return to Oxford momentarily jeopardized (she could have had no premonition in what strange new light that day would subsequently be cast). "Don't you want to hear what happened?" she writes of him pleading. "Pavel's voice and Pavel's question," she goes on to note. "Genetics had done a good job. . . . Poor Jan, he was only partly to blame. . . . His organism had reacted to Pavel's imprisonment with severe headaches. Psychologically he had adapted to continuing tension, but once the pattern had been set, he seemed compelled to create unending stress situations."

Kavan's fingers tapped on the tabletop. I asked him how the defamation suit he had filed against the Interior Ministry was going.

"Incredibly slowly," he replied. "The court meets, raises interminable technical complications, recesses for months at a time. I don't hold out much hope of ever achieving satisfaction there. That's one of the reasons I decided to have myself lustrated."

BEING lustrated, as various observers have noted, is every bit as painful as it sounds. The word "lustration" derives from the Latin *lustratio*, which means purification by sacrifice. Czechoslovakia's 1991 lustration law, which established the basic ground rules for the country's political-purification rituals, derived from the Czech public's rapidly evolving attitude toward the country's immediate past. On New Year's Day of 1990, shortly after becoming Czechoslovakia's President, Vaclav Havel gave an address in which he spoke of a "decayed moral environment" as being one of the country's principal legacies from its Communist past, but he was careful not to assign blame too narrowly. In a passage that in many ways epitomized the velvetness of the Velvet Revolution he noted, "When I talk about a decayed moral environment . . . I mean all of us, because all of us became accustomed to the totalitarian system, accepted it as an unalterable fact, and thereby kept it running. . . . None of us is merely victim of it, because all of us helped to create it together. . . . We cannot lay all the blame on those who ruled us before, not only because this would not be true but also because it could detract from the responsibility each of us now faces—the responsibility to act on our own initiative, freely, sensibly, and quickly."

This attitude, at once expansive, forward-looking, and scrupulously lucid, typified much of the thinking at the top of the new government, including such veteran oppositionists as the Czech Premier Petr Pithart, and the foreign minister, Jiri Dienstbier. As had happened earlier in Poland, a decision was made that there would be no easy scapegoats. In part (again as in Poland), this decision grew out of the very way in which the final transfer of power had been effected—through negotiations, without violence. One just didn't turn around and arrest the very people whose hands one had been shaking on occasions of high solemnity only a few weeks earlier. In the Czech case, however, the forbearance was taken to such an extreme that for the first six months of the new order the StB was left largely to its own devices; it is partly for that reason that so many of the key files were subsequently found to be missing. And that forbearance was in turn partly responsible for aggravating the growing public feeling that the entire transition must have been one big fix.

During any extended period of totalitarian governance, terrible things happen to good people and wonderful things happen to bad ones. And during any transition from such a period of unjust governance a principal challenge is that both those legacies must be addressed. One problem with Havel's magnanimous initial position was that it addressed neither. There were many people—and not just dissidents—who had suffered grievously under the previous regime, and many other people who had inflicted much of that suffering. As upset as Czechs were by the continuing plight of the victims, they were even more galled by the seemingly blithe impunity being lavished upon the perpetrators. Unpunished, these earlier winners were quickly turning their advantages of position to more purely financial advantage, and thus setting themselves up to emerge as the new winners. Furthermore, many people felt that as long as those minions of the prior system continued to retain their positions of authority they would inevitably sabotage all attempts to set up a new dispensation, either intentionally (and maybe even systematically) or else through sheer incompetence and ineptitude. As months passed, the calls for a more thoroughgoing housecleaning became increasingly insistent, and as those calls began to be answered by ad-hoc improvisations, differing radically from one region or ministry or industry to another, pressure grew for the central government to arrive at some unified policy on the matter.

ON THE MEETING OF GARCIA LORCA AND HART CRANE

Brooklyn, 1929. Of course Crane's
been drinking and has no idea who
this curious Andalusian is, unable
even to speak the language of poetry.
The young man who brought them
together knows both Spanish and English,
but he has a headache from jumping
back and forth from one language
to another. For a moment's relief
he goes to the window to look
down on the East River, darkening
below as the early night comes on.
Something flashes across his sight,
a double vision of such horror
he has to slap both his hands across
his mouth to keep from screaming.
Let's not be frivolous, let's
not pretend the two poets gave
each other wisdom or love or
even a good time, let's not
invent a dialogue of such eloquence
that even the ants in your own
house won't forget it. The two
greatest poetic geniuses alive
meet, and what happens? A vision
comes to an ordinary man staring
at a filthy river. Have you ever
had a vision? Have you ever shaken
your head to pieces and jerked back
at the image of your young son
falling through open space, not
from the stern of a ship bound
from Vera Cruz to New York but from
the roof of the building he works on?
Have you risen from bed to pace
until dawn to beg a merciless God
to take these pictures away? Oh, yes,
let's bless the imagination. It gives
us the myths we live by. Let's bless
the visionary power of the human
(the only animal that's got it),
bless the exact image of your father
dead and mine dead, bless the images
that stalk the corners of our sight
and will not let go. The young man
was my cousin, Arthur Lieberman,
then a language student at Columbia,
who told me all this before he died
quietly in his sleep in 1983
in a hotel in Perugia. A good man,
Arthur, he survived graduate school,
later came home to Detroit and sold
pianos right through the Depression.
He loaned my brother a used one
to compose his hideous songs on,
which Arthur thought were genius.
What an imagination Arthur had!

—PHILIP LEVINE

Right-wing parliamentarians, in particular, were clamoring for a bill that would simply prohibit all former Communists above a certain level, all military officers above a certain rank, and all security agents and their collaborators from holding any positions of authority—fairly broadly defined—within the state. While Havel and his allies now acknowledged the validity of some of the thinking behind that impulse, they nevertheless objected to its basic premise of collective guilt—the theory that individuals ought to be punished for mere membership in a group, regardless of personal culpability for the evils perpetrated by that group. A draft bill that the government presented to Parliament in early September of 1991 required that whatever purging eventually took place be limited to those members of the previously delineated categories who could themselves be shown to have participated in "suppressing human rights," with the burden of proof falling on the government, and the accused guaranteed a certain minimal due process and right of appeal. The rightist parliamentarians objected that such a standard would have the opposite effect of insulating most of the malefactors, since it would be virtually impossible to prove any given individual's participation in suppressing human rights. The debate seemed to settle into a shrill impasse, but then, in October, in the immediate aftermath of the scare caused by the failed Soviet coup, the rightists were suddenly able to force through a bill largely along the lines they had originally favored.

Once the bill had passed, Havel faced a new signing drama, in many ways more subtle and complex than any he had confronted or written about during his simple days as a dissident: whether or not to affix his signature to a bill many of whose provisions he disdained. There were, however, powerful practical reasons in favor of signing, not the least of which was the challenge of obstructionist former Communists in Slovakia who had recast themselves as nationalists and, as such, were threatening the very survival of the Czecho-Slovak union. Eventually, he did sign the bill, while simultaneously submitting proposed revisions for consideration by the Parliament—a moot gesture, since the revisions were of precisely the sort that the Parliament had rejected in approving the bill. Havel's behavior with regard to Kavan's case was remarkably similar: For years, during his English exile, Kavan had been responsible for smuggling many of Havel's principal texts out of Czechoslovakia and seeing to their initial distribution. After Kavan's denunciation, however, Havel, as President, declined to inject himself into the controversy in any public, active way—in part, perhaps, because he may have harbored doubts of his own (Kavan *was* a controversial figure even in oppositionist circles), but mainly, it seems, because he was attempting to keep his office above the fray so as to be better able to wield his influence in the more important struggles of the day, notably his attempt to keep the country from breaking up. Whenever he was directly asked about Kavan, he would speak in a general way about his pain at the potential injustices inherent in the procedures and their lack of due process. He did eventually find a way to express a bit more solidarity on a personal basis, however, agreeing to meet informally one afternoon with Kavan and Petr Uhl in a very public setting, the Hlavkova café, from where he presumably could be sure word of the meeting would quickly spread throughout the city.

The new law applied to both current and prospective holders of more than two hundred thousand government positions. (Kavan was able to bring about his lustration merely by applying for one of those jobs.) Its operation in the matter of senior Party or military or security-service officials was more or less straightforward: if you had been above a certain rank, you were fired or, at any rate, had to accept a lower position. When it came to former collaborators with the secret police (informers and the like), the secrecy of the collaboration rendered the situation far more complex. Anybody could have been a collaborator, and many people had been.

Indeed, grasping the extent of the StB's penetration of Czech society requires an understanding of how the StB operated. In part thanks to the dramas of Vaclav Havel himself, people in the West are fairly familiar with the classic totalitarian quandary of whether or not to sign the petition—the decent, if somewhat weak, man faced with the terrible dilemma of whether to risk his livelihood and his family's well-being by finally taking a principled stand in opposition to some particular state travesty. The tattered page before him, his trembling hand: To sign or not to sign? But we are perhaps not as aware of another sort of signing drama—this first one's eerie obverse—that was continually occurring inside Czechoslovakia, as in the other Communist countries, all through those years. For the secret police there demanded more than mere conformity; they craved collusion. They would set their sights on a given individual, and through artful blends of threat and seduction, of extortion and bribery, they would endeavor to get that person to cross over to their side, to join their ranks. And this dance always culminated—for theirs was a bureaucratic culture par excellence—in the proffering of a form, a mere sheet of paper, and the request for a signature. A pact with the devil, and again the same barbed question: To sign or not to sign? Sometimes, all that was being asked for was that signature; sometimes, more would be required. Sometimes, that signature connoted the commitment to do considerably more, sometimes nothing more than solemnly to promise never to speak to anyone else of these dark contacts (an odd agreement, that: "Sign here your confirmation that we never met"). The StB agents were under considerable pressure continually to extend their web of complicity, to recruit more informers, to collect more signatures. They got bonuses: three more signatures, a television set! Sometimes, as is now known, they fabricated signatures, although not people: the people were real, the signatures were faked. ("We're not talking Kafka here," as one observer noted. "This was Gogol, or Graham Greene: 'Our Man in Prague.' ") All the signatures gravitated toward the center and got entered into the registry, a master list, which also included the names of mere subjects of investigation, or even of established enemies of the state. Sometimes it was easy to tell the difference, but often it was not.

At any rate, this master registry became the focal point for the lustration process as it related to the security services. The drama of signing would now be turned inside out—into a drama of naming. According to the new law, every state employee or applicant for state employment above a certain defined level would be required to have himself lustrated; that is, his name would be submitted to a panel at the Interior Ministry, and the panel would consult the register and, within sixty days, issue a certificate declaring the person "StB positive" or "StB negative." If the applicant turned up negative, he would present that certificate to his superior and retain his job. If he came out positive, the best thing for him to do would be to resign quietly.

As the lustration campaign began to kick into high gear, it aroused concern among several international monitoring organizations, ranging from the International Labor Organization, in Geneva, to Helsinki Watch, in New York. Serious questions were raised about the principle of collective guilt, the reliability of the StB registry, the failure to distinguish between levels of culpability within that registry, the lack of due-process safeguards (including a misplaced burden of proof and a too limited right of appeal), and the imminent likelihood that the campaign would break out of its current high-governmental context.

Jeri Laber, the director of Helsinki Watch and a veteran defender of Charter 77 and other Czech causes, summarized many of these concerns in an article that *The New York Review of Books* published in its April 23, 1992, issue, under the headline "WITCH HUNT IN PRAGUE." Many of the people I spoke with, both in London and in Prague, were angry about that piece, and angriest of all, perhaps, about its title, with its implication that things were getting out of hand in Czechoslovakia—indeed, that the place had already descended into a McCarthyite hysteria. Two confederates of Roger Scruton's, Christine Stone and Mark Almond, writing under the letterhead of the British Helsinki Human Rights Group, composed a letter to *The New York Review's* editor, in which they noted, "Although Ms. Laber mentions meeting various well-known figures in Prague she does not seem to have discussed the lustration law with Jaroslav Basta, the chairman of the Independent Commission implementing it. Had she spoken with Mr. Basta, Ms. Laber's fears might have been laid to rest. He is an eloquent advocate of the right of all individuals to the presumption of innocence until guilt is proven beyond reasonable doubt. His Commission's use of forensic analysis to date and authenticate secret police documents, and its unwillingness to rely on the testimony of former StB agents, refute Ms. Laber's assertion that the secret police 'still rule, reaching out from the grave.' "

Partly with this letter in mind, I made a point of visiting Mr. Basta at his office when I went to Prague, and I indeed found him both eloquent and manifestly decent.

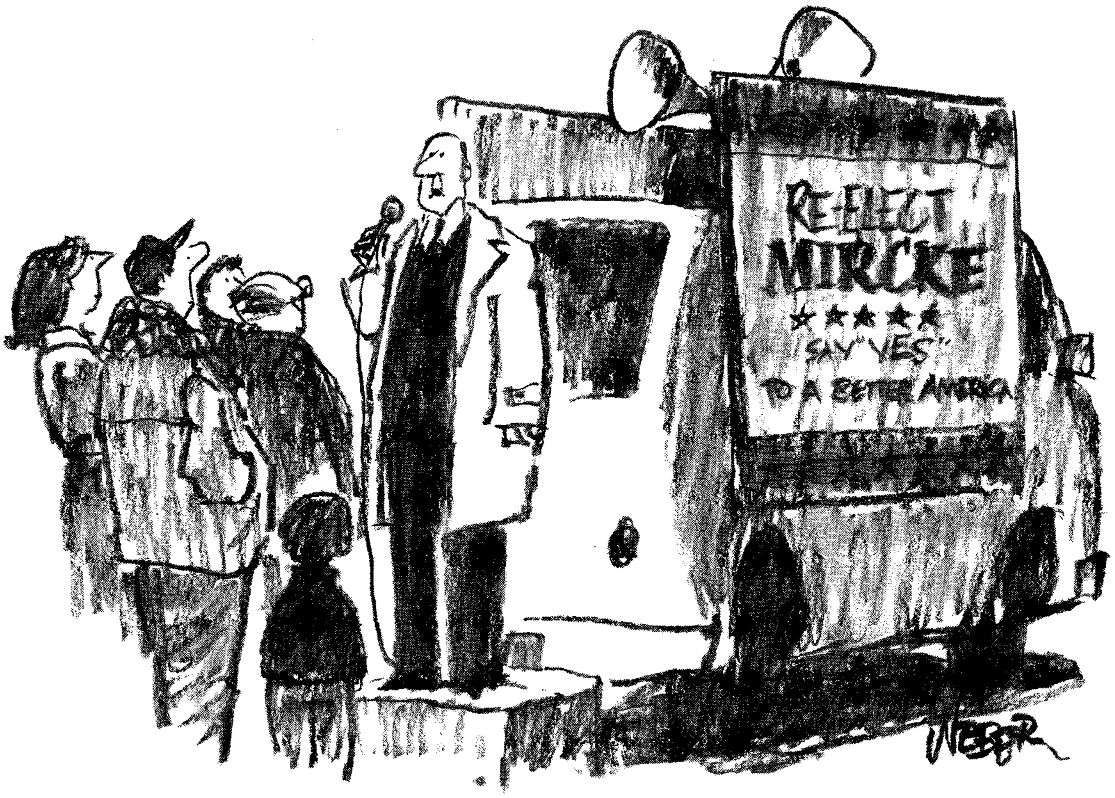
Basta is a relatively young man—roughly Kavan's age. He had known and worked with Kavan when both were student radicals. Basta was an archeologist by training, but after being arrested, in 1970, for "subversive activities" and serving a subsequent two-and-a-half-year sentence in prison he had been blocked from pursuing his chosen profession—officially, at least. He had been consigned to work in construction thereafter, yet he nevertheless managed to pursue his real vocation in his spare time, composing dozens of highly regarded papers on the prehistory of Western Bohemia. In our conversation he acknowledged that many of the skills he had honed in those studies were of considerable value in his current work, which consisted of sifting through reams of ambiguous data in search of plausible accounts of the prehistory of various fairly or unfairly accused individuals, and our talk turned to the archeology of collaboration.

"I feel I've seen it all by this time," Basta said, with a deep sigh. One of the first signers of Charter 77, Basta was one of the first delegates that the Civic Forum finally posted to the Interior Ministry, and he had held various positions there and in its successors. "I've scoured hundreds of files," he went on. "There were so many different kinds of collaboration and reasons for collaborating. Some people informed for the StB out of ideological conviction—though, actually, surprisingly few. With some, the motivation was petty jealousy or small-time revenge. Some were just born informers; in many ways, those were the worst—the twisted ones. Some collaborated for material gain, or to advance their careers—so as to be able to travel abroad, for instance—or not to have their careers dashed. There were some who were blackmailed into collaborating: the StB was regularly on the lookout for people's weaknesses, and it would exploit every lapse, every vulnerability. I've heard horrible stories. Some people were put under terrible pressure while serving jail sentences for various political crimes—or, threatened with jail, they were unable to withstand that pressure—and signed on. Some did it out of love—so as not to blight a child's education, or so as to be able finally to visit a family member stranded abroad. Some who signed went on to do terrible damage to the lives of their neighbors or coworkers. Others signed and did virtually nothing, offering no information of any import whatever. Still others signed and almost immediately thought better of it; racked by guilt, they may have collaborated for a few weeks and never again. Some of those then joined—or rejoined—the dissident movement and subsequently put in years of solid, important work."

And was that his job, I interjected—to sort out all those gradations and evaluate all those mitigating factors?

"Oh, no," he replied. "The great majority of those people I can't help at all. The law makes no provision for any such mitigating circumstances. If you ever signed—if you're listed in the registry under Category A or B, which means that your signature is on file—that's it: You're StB positive, and there's no appeal. You're lustrated. No, our commission is empowered under the law to handle only the appeals of people in the borderline so-called Category C, which is a very narrow category—maybe only two thousand cases. We can examine the entire files of those people, subpoena witnesses and enforce testimony under oath, and then render a binding verdict. When it comes to those people, we do have the authority to clear their names. But everybody else . . . " He shrugged, paused, and went on, "I've considered this law for a long time, and I have to tell you I don't think much either of it or of the people who initiated it."

THERE were all kinds of arguments both in favor of and opposed to lustration, some more convincing than others, but it seemed to me that the real sources of the passion swirling around the issue ran deeper than mere argumentation. This was particularly evi-



"Vote for me so I can get on with my life."

dent, I came to feel, with regard to two types of support that the campaign was garnering.

The first involved former dissident activists who were vehement proponents of lustration. They were a small minority. In general, you could almost take it as a rule: go through Amnesty International's old Czechoslovak files, and you'd find that the more severely persecuted an oppositionist had been under the old regime, the less adamant he was likely to be today about lustration. Nevertheless, its enthusiastic advocates did include some distinguished longtime oppositionists, and I had a lengthy conversation with one of these: Pavel Bratinka, a leading Catholic radical free marketeer, who had become one of the guiding lights of the relatively small but remarkably dynamic new O.D.A. (Civic Democratic Alliance) political party. At one point in our discussion, I brought up a couple of Basta's examples—people who had been blackmailed into signing, or those who had signed out of love, out of a wish to be able to visit a daughter abroad, say—and I asked Bratinka whether he felt that such cases might not rate some special dispensation.

His lips curling with disgust, he said, "If they were blackmailable before, who's to say they wouldn't be blackmailable again? The people have a right to protect themselves from those who enslaved them; of course such people should be lustrated. The point is that these acts of cowardice of theirs had consequences. There were people who didn't sign, who retained their dignity and didn't get to go see their daughter. If a man admits that he was nothing but a weakling—and that is what his having signed those papers proves—why shouldn't people have the right to know he was a weakling? And why should society have to endure the continued presence of such weaklings in positions of authority? I am a solid-state physicist, but for eight years, because I refused to sign, I was forced to work as a street-cleaner and a stoker. Everybody could earn a living honestly during those years in this country. And those who failed to showed a bizarre lack of moral conscience. Why should they be spared the publication of that truth now?"

Many of Bratinka's former allies in the dissident struggle recoiled at such expressions of self-righteous vindictiveness. "Savonarola" was one formula I frequently heard to characterize the attitude. The self-righteously vindictive theme, however, amounted to only a trickle in the pro-lustration flood, perhaps because only a small number of lustration's supporters had any claim to feelings of self-righteous purity. For the fact is—and this was a key part of the Czech reality and, indeed, the principal source of lustration's main tributary of support—that hardly anybody in Czechoslovakia ever did actively oppose the regime. Unlike the situation in Poland, for example, where millions took an active role in the 1980-81 Solidarity movement—the movement that both prefigured and provoked the collapse of Communism—the post-1968 opposition in Czechoslovakia was never able to claim more than a few thousand active members. For example, Charter 77, for all its moral weight and historic import, garnered only 1,864 signatures. As late as the summer of 1989, well after the Soviets had clearly signalled that they would no longer be coming to the assistance of any floundering fraternal allies, the Czech "A Few Sentences" petition was able to secure only thirty-nine thousand signatures out of a total population of more than fifteen million.

"THAT silence was what mattered, not any individual bastards," Jan Urban, a journalist, who was one of the bravest and most dynamic opposition activists during the eighties, told me. "And all the current noise surrounding lustration is simply a way of keeping silent about that silence."

"There is an old Czech proverb," a young veteran dissident named Vaclav Trojan told me in Prague. " 'The robber always cries "Stop, thief!" ' The fact is that a lot of people did benefit under the previous system. They attended the May Day parades, joined the requisite organizations, kept the Party posters in their storefront windows, as in Havel's famous example. And, in exchange, they enjoyed their petty prosperities and got to build and stock their summer houses." These summer houses were an important part of Husak's post-1968 strategy of normalization. During the seventies and eighties, the residents of Prague, for example, embarked upon a vast program of constructing small summer shacks and cabins in the hills and valleys surrounding the city. Within the boundaries of their little summer plots, they were allowed virtually complete freedom—just as long as they didn't try to extend that freedom an inch beyond those boundaries. As time passed, one of the most effective threats the regime was able to wield was precisely the enforced forfeiture of such summer amenities.

Jaroslav Basta told me during our conversation, "You may have noticed how the countries having the most trouble with issues of the lustration sort are those where the transition was the most abrupt—Czechoslovakia and East Germany, for example, as opposed to Poland and Hungary. I see this as a delayed reaction to the *way* we did away with Communism. People found that if they just went into the streets en masse for a few days, jangling their key rings, the whole regime would crumble—and after a few weeks of merriment they began asking themselves, somewhat sheepishly, 'Well, why didn't we do it sooner if it was all so easy?' And they answered themselves, 'Because we were afraid.' But of what? The thought that there may have been nothing to be afraid of would be very unpleasant to accept.

FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW YORKER

Our Washington Correspondents

The finest example of neighborliness is now to be found in the way everybody shares a car or a taxicab. When you find a cab (which is difficult), you are supposed to announce your destination to all within earshot, so that others headed the same way can get a lift. It is unpatriotic and unfashionable to ride in an automobile by yourself. The fullest flowering of this democratic way of life occurred outside the Shoreham at nine o'clock one morning a while ago. A sweltering group of people, most of them clutching briefcases, were waiting for cabs. There was a flurry when Paul V. McNutt, whose platinum glitter seems to cause a sensation anywhere, emerged. As his big Cadillac, bearing the government seal, purred up to the entrance, Mr. McNutt turned cheerily to the group. "Anybody going to the White House?" he asked.

—LIPSTICK

That's why it became better to speak of this demonic, omnipresent StB apparatus, with its treacherous agents everywhere who held us all down and now needed to be revealed and expunged—better that than admitting the truth, which was one's own lack of courage."

Zdenek Kavan, Jan's brother, who himself largely steered clear of oppositional politics during the decades of his own British exile, and instead became a lecturer in international relations at the University of Sussex, pointed out to me that the current purge storm in Czechoslovakia was hardly unique. "It saddens me, of course, but in general terms I anticipated something like this—it was bound to happen, especially in Czechoslovakia," he said. "After all, we're speaking of a small nation in the middle of Europe which has been trying to assert its independence while being regularly overrun, either occupied by or subsumed under the control of its vastly more powerful neighbors—a place where individual survival has necessarily entailed varying degrees of collaboration over long periods. Czech history over the past century constitutes a series of harrowing switchbacks: 1918, 1938, 1945, 1948, 1968, 1989—major upheavals followed by purifying purges, and never enough time between upheavals to settle into any lasting pattern of stability or to develop ordinary rules for managing disagreement. The common thread running through this entire history is an allergy against accepting degrees of ambiguity, layers of personal responsibility. It is those who never lifted a finger to oppose the old regime who are pushing for these purges, demanding the publication of all those lists. The nice thing about a list is that if you're not on it you can consider yourself pure."

You can consider yourself pure, and you're now able to prove yourself retrospectively ferocious. Basta, when I had my talk with him, declined to speak about the Kavan case directly, since it might yet be coming before his commission. "I will say this, however," he offered. "I well remember the tons of books and material he was responsible for smuggling into this country, books that most of his critics today never read, or even saw, lacking the courage at the time even to be in the same room with them."

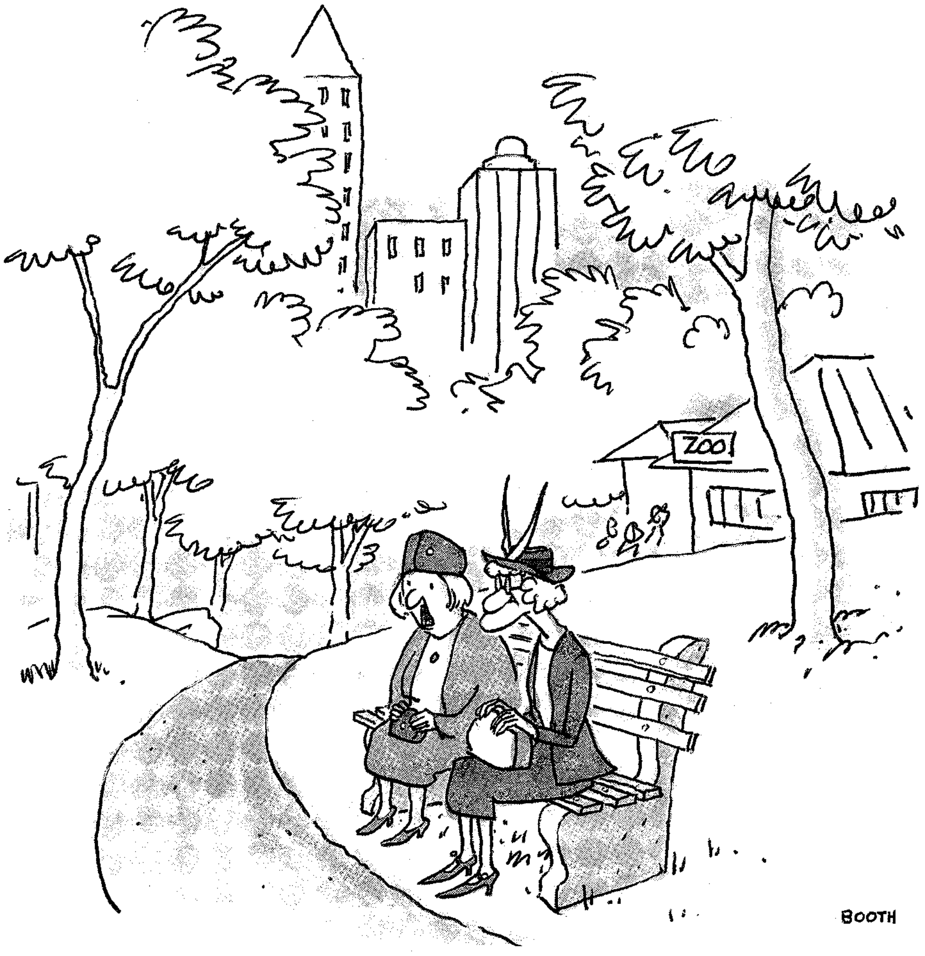
Jiri Hajek, Dubcek's foreign minister and one of Charter 77's leading spokesmen, commented bitterly, "Those who considered us pointlessly quixotic and never deigned to assist us in any way—now, suddenly, they're all so fiercely courageous!"

And matters were even more perverse: it wasn't just who got to purify himself; there was also the question "At whose expense?" Though the lustration law cited various categories of lustratable offenders—officials of the Communist Party above a certain rank, members of the People's Militia, informers on the StB registry, and so forth—it was principally the informers on the StB registry who most seemed to capture the public imagination and to provoke the greatest ire. And this was no accident.

Jana Frankova, a well-connected interpreter, told me, "The terrible thing is that those most likely to arouse the notice of the StB in the first place and hence to get dragged in for questioning—whether or not they subsequently succumbed to its pressures or seductions and thus ended up being placed, rightly or wrongly, on the registry list—were those who had been showing their opposition to the regime in some active way. With a few exceptions, one can see in retrospect how that was the organizing principle behind all those lists."

Someone else recalled for me the once common aspersion "Oh, he's so stupid not even the StB would care about him." And that was precisely the attraction of the StB-informants list as a principal vehicle for purification: by definition, the resolutely stupid and the deliberately disengaged were not likely to be on it. On the contrary, and not by coincidence, it was former activists—and in significant numbers—who were likely to be making appearances on that list, right alongside the authentically reprehensible.

"People now realize that it was possible to live differently, not just in silence," commented Jirina Siklova, the sociologist who put in many years as Kavan's key interior contact. (She has



"A monkey winked at me this morning."

• •

"Don't you just love talking up a storm?"

• •

written extensively on the so-called gray zone, the class of surly managers and bureaucrats and academics who, despising the regime all the while, never did a thing to oppose it.) "The dissidents persist as a kind of living guilty conscience. That's why there's so much resentment directed against the old dissidents, Havel excepted, and why they hold very few of the major posts. People hate themselves and project that hate upon the StB or onto the dissidents. And whenever it becomes possible to imagine that the StB and the dissidents were somehow collaborating all along—well, that's enormously satisfying to people. 'See?' they can tell themselves. 'The dissident movement *was* completely infiltrated and controlled by the StB, just the way I always figured!' " (A few days later, I heard a variant of this formulation from the mouths of organizers of the Anti-Communist Alliance, an extremist wing of the purifying crusade. "The other day, there was a Charter 77 reunion," one of them told me. "Jesus, I've never seen so many StB agents in one place." He paused, and then added confidentially, "You know, we have evidence that fully one-third of the Charter 77 members were StB agents.") " 'See?' " Siklova continued her encapsulation of the majority temper. " 'I was *right* not to get involved in their silly games. The *smart* thing to do was to keep quiet.' "

This attitude was not merely a vague temper permeating Czech culture as a whole: it was the quite specific program of one of the country's most successful political parties—the O.D.S. (Civic Democratic Party), headed by the charismatic finance minister, Vaclav Klaus. Klaus was perhaps Czechoslovakia's most articulate and compelling advocate of the fastest possible conversion to the most extreme free-market economy as the ideal solution for all the woes of post-Communism. As such, he and his party were leading contenders in the coming parliamentary elections. The trouble was that his résumé could not boast a single anti-Communist credential before November of 1989. A quintessential inhabitant of Siklova's gray zone, Klaus had maintained a cushy sinecure at the Economic Institute of the Academy of Sciences, where, shielded by a boss who was a member of the Communist Party, he hadn't had to sully himself personally with Party membership. Nor, on the other hand, had he ever sullied himself with anti-Party activism. People say that as late as 1989 he declined to sign a petition protesting Havel's most recent imprisonment. The prominent oppositionist Rita Klimova used to arrange private screenings in her apartment of current Western videos (smuggled in by diplomatic pouch) for the benefit of her dissident colleagues. I was told how Klaus indicated that he, too, would be eager to view such choice offerings, but only on the condition that no active oppositionists were present in the apartment at the same time. So Klimova had to arrange separate screenings for gray-zone movie buffs.

The O.D.S.'s problem was that there were other free marketeers (including many of those grouped around Pavel Bratinka's O.D.A.), and also politicians who were by no means as sanguine about the prospects for a full-bore conversion to untrammelled capitalism (including many of those grouped around Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier's O.H., or Civic Movement) and who could claim far better oppositionist pedigrees, as veterans of either Charter 77 or the original 1968 upsurge, or of both. And so the O.D.S. strategy was, in effect, to undercut the authority of Charter 77 through tarrings with the StB brush, while downgrading the Dubcekite achievement to the level of mere intra-Party wranglings involving Communists of varying stripes.

Frankly, I was astonished at how successfully this revisionist perspective on the events of 1968 had taken root, and how thoroughly Dubcek was held in contempt by many of the people I spoke with. It looked as though, under the provisions of the lustration law, Dubcek himself, once his term as chairman of the Federal Assembly was over, wouldn't even be allowed to return to his internal exile as a desk clerk in the Forestry Ministry—the job to which the Communists had long since remanded him. (There was a good deal of ludicrous historical revisionism on both sides of the divide. While the members of the generation of '68 were by no means the vile Communist toadies they were being portrayed as, neither was the stunning current transformation "precisely what we'd had in mind all along," even though that's what many of their number had taken to proclaiming.) At any rate, Kavan, as both a veteran '68er and a prominent Charter 77 supporter, offered a perfect foil for this crucial campaign of de-legitimatization, and O.D.S.-allied journals often tended to lead the charge against him.

THE lustration law's defenders regularly pointed to its rigorous provisions delimiting applicability and guaranteeing confidentiality. Many of those attacking Jeri Laber's *New York Review* piece, for example, complained that she had made it sound as if the lists were just floating about free, so that people were liable to be sacked from just about any job on their account, whereas the law was quite specific about which positions were to be affected and about how the procedures followed in establishing any particular individual's liability under the law were to be cloaked in absolute confidentiality. What could be more civilized? Why all the fuss?

The trouble was that, whether or not this was how the law was supposed to work, or had even started out working, by the time I got to Prague late this past spring the practice of lustration was breaking wildly out of its contours. The law stipulated which positions *had* to be lustrated but didn't preclude lustration for other positions, either governmental or private; and overzealous public officials quickly overreached. When the education minister was asked about the propriety of having head cooks at schools lustrated—a move that had recently been required—he said, "This is not exactly in harmony with the law, but it answers pressure from the public."

As long as somebody was being officially lustrated, at least the confidentiality of any eventual determination was still being assured. However, the master list itself soon began leaking in sporadic batches, along with choice unprocessed files. At first, the leaks seemed maddeningly random. As I was visiting Peter Brod, an exceptionally knowledgeable researcher for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, at his office one afternoon, his fax machine started clattering away, spewing out, without any covering letter, a numbered and alphabetized list of names, birth dates, alleged code names, file numbers, and current professions—five pages, with a hundred and seventy-seven names. Brod was singularly unfazed. "Oh, that?" he said. "That happens all the time these days—anonymous lists of supposed StB operatives coming in unsolicited, over the transom. Notice that it's not even identified as such. It's simply a list of names—with no source identified, either. An everyday occurrence. We don't broadcast or publish such lists ourselves, but others do. Who's to say whether it's an authentic list, and, even if it is, what having one's name appear on the list signifies? But the city is swarming with such things."

Susan Greenberg, the *Guardian's* correspondent, told me how difficult it was to be a journalist in such an atmosphere. "If you come along and try to make distinctions, then you are part of the conspiracy," she said. "Stefan Bacinsky, the former head of the F.B.I.S."—the Federal Security Information Service, one of the replacements of the old StB and a principal keeper of the master list—"recently declared that criticism of the F.B.I.S. was part of a conspiracy to discredit Czechoslovakia. People here don't know how to argue. Everything is framed in Manichaean terms and immediately gets personal. This, of course, is one of the persistent legacies of the Communist style. I can understand their desire to come to terms with the past, but what I don't like is how the minute you try to defend a principle, you get accused of taking sides. More and more, people have stopped putting up any argument about observance of the lustration law, for fear of being labelled."

And things were about to get significantly worse. With the official start of the parliamentary-election campaign a few days off, Stefan Bacinsky suddenly let it be known that the F.B.I.S., apparently without any authorization or directive, had gone off and compiled a list of several hundred journalists known to have been StB informants. Actually, what he had done was simply to run the membership list of the newly reconstituted Journalists Syndicate through a computer already containing the celebrated master list—a process that resulted in a new list of purported journalist–StB agents. The results were utterly shocking, he declared, and constituted a serious imminent threat to national security, because of the evident potential for widespread disinformation or blackmail. (He offered no specific instances of either disinformation or blackmail.) He wasn't about to release the list himself—he wasn't empowered to, he explained

"I'm about as mainstream as you can get. I go to church, I'm all for the family, I hate Saddam Hussein, and I'm unemployed."

primly—but he did let it be known that he had given copies to the Prime Minister and to the chairman of Parliament. Furious debates ensued, with right-wing parliamentarians, in particular, demanding immediate publication of the list, on the ground that those listed posed grave threats to the nation's well-being, especially on the eve of such a crucial electoral campaign. Parliamentary leaders eventually decided to distribute the list to all parliamentarians, for information purposes only, and only on the condition that they all swore to keep its contents a secret. "Well, that does it," Jan Urban told me when he heard the news. "You watch. Within twenty-four hours, the entire list will have been published."

And, indeed, within twenty-four hours it was—by the right-wing daily *Telegraf*, whose deputy editor, the respected journalist Jindrich Hoda, was himself on the list. Wasting no time, *Telegraf* summarily fired him.

I HAD a chance to talk with Hoda a few days later, and he still looked shell-shocked. He said he doubted whether he'd ever be able to get similar employment. He explained to me that he had indeed been courted by the StB over a period of several years, several years ago. He had then been working at *Lidove Demokracie;* in fact, he had put in twenty-five years there, fifteen as head of the foreign desk. *Lidove Demokracie* was the daily of the long-standing, Catholic-based People's Party, which continued to print during the Communist regime, and, as such, it was allowed slightly more independence than most of the mainstream Communist journals. For that reason, however, it became a particular target of StB concern and penetration, and so StB agents would approach him fairly regularly and insist that he come out with them for a few drinks, just to talk things over informally. Scared—yet a bit bemused as well by their sheer oafishness—he would go. "But I always paid for my own drinks," he said. "And sometimes even for theirs. I know that sounds bad, but what if I'd let *them* pay for *my* drinks? That, too, would have sounded bad. That's the kind of knot they were able to tie you into." The agents weren't after any information about his co-workers, he said. Instead, they were trying to recruit him as a foreign courier in their international division: if he would just agree to deliver the odd occasional envelope or package to the assigned mail drop, they would arrange for him to get a passport. In all those years as foreign editor, he had never been allowed to travel abroad. He said he regularly declined the offer. "And then, one time, they suddenly took out a sheet of paper and pressed me to sign," he recalled. "All at once, things turned very serious, and I became terrified. But I refused. I swear on the lives of my children that I never signed anything. I never informed. And the best proof is that I never did get to travel abroad. What I wish I could do is demand that my file be opened. Then everybody could see there's no signed oath, it's all a lie. The trouble is, this is a private proceeding—I was fired by a private company—so I have no standing; the records are confidential. My life has been stripped from me, and I have virtually no recourse."

Hoda went on to maintain that Bacinsky's claims about national security were "sheer bullshit." He pulled out his own copy of *Telegraf*. "Look at this list," he said. "Several of these people are dead. The F.B.I.S. didn't even bother to cross-check its list of supposed national-security threats against the obituary tables. And an awful lot of the names on the list are those of sportswriters, and that stands to reason: sportswriters had to travel abroad a good deal. But what sort of threat could they possibly be posing to national security?"

Forty of Hoda's former colleagues at *Lidove Demokracie* were also on the list. Hoda told me he had quit the paper about a year ago, when he was recruited by the team that was developing a new daily, *Telegraf*. Its co-publisher was Miroslav Macek, the vice-chairman of Klaus's O.D.S.; the editor-in-chief, Jakub Cisar, was only twenty-six years old and had no prior journalistic experience. It was to be Hoda's job to get the thing running—to participate in over-all recruitment, to design layout and procedures, to supervise the paper's day-to-day operation. All of which he'd done.

A few days later, I talked with Jakub Cisar. He was a large man, solid—dapperly dressed and supremely self-confident. He explained that he had been proud of his paper's scoop in publishing the journalists list, because citizens had a right to know about the background of those who were filtering the news—and, beyond that, publication of this list was essential if one was to prevent the blackmailing of such journalists down the line.

I asked about Hoda.

"He was on the list, so we had to fire him," Cisar said. "How could we have maintained the trust of our readers if we hadn't?"

But, I pointed out, Hoda insists that he was never an StB informant and never signed a thing. In retrospect, could Cisar identify anything suspicious about Hoda? Had Hoda himself ever, as far as Cisar knew, tried to plant any piece of disinformation in the pages of their daily?

"Oh, no." Cisar seemed to laugh at the thought.

Had Hoda in fact played as important a role in the launching of the paper as he claimed—hiring staff, establishing day-to-day procedures, and so forth?

"Basically, yes."

Had he been a good editor—responsible, efficient?

"Definitely."

Was he reliable? Had he ever lied to Cisar regarding any matter of significance?

"Not really—not that I can remember."

And yet here he was now, insisting that he'd never been an StB informant. What ground did Cisar have to doubt him?

"Because my boss, Mr. Macek, who's in a position to know, assures me that the list is one-hundred-per-cent reliable." Cisar was silent for a few moments, gazing down at his shoes uncomfortably, and then he said, "Anyway, it was Mr. Macek who fired him."

Another surprising name that showed up on the list was that of the photographer Antonin Novy. I remem-

FASHION NOTES

FIRST SHOES FROM ITALY

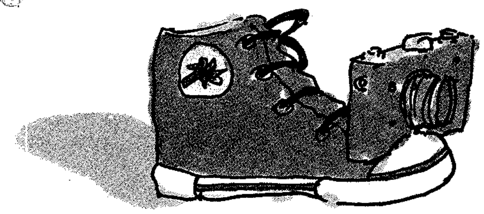
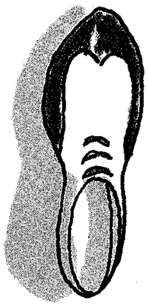


FOTO-BOY



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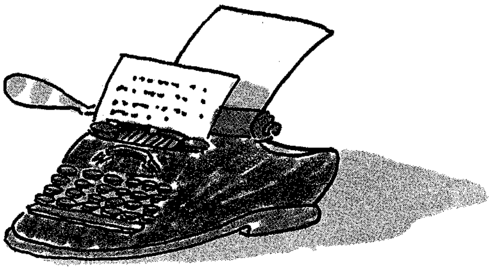

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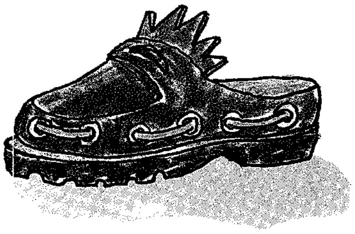

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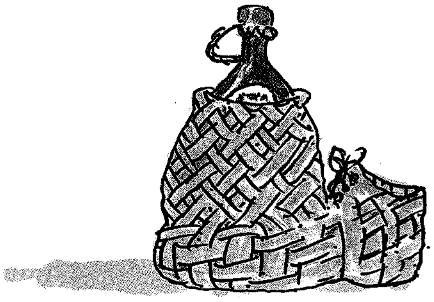

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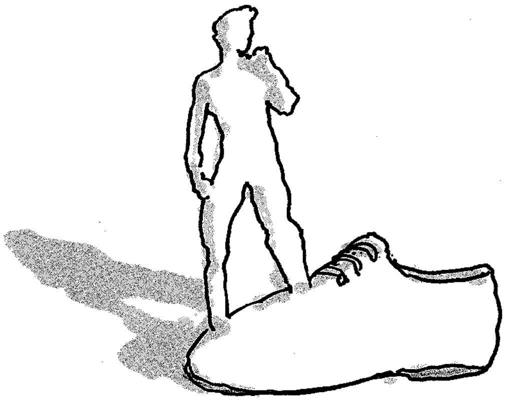

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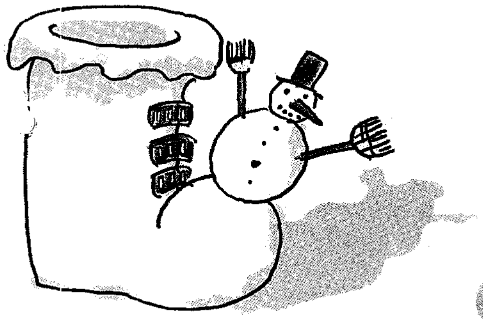
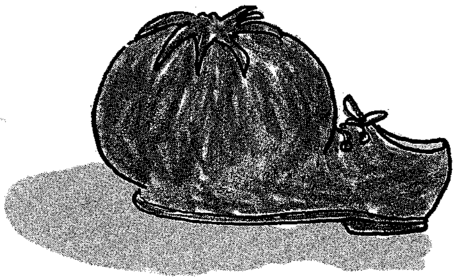
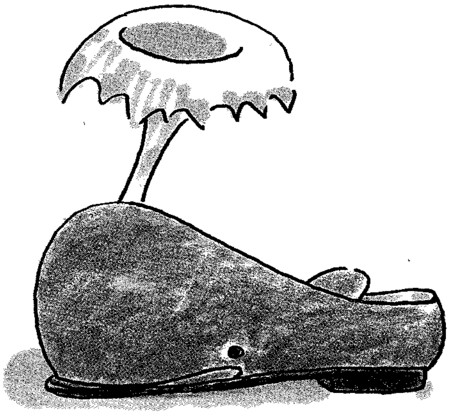


MISTER BROOMS



SALSA TOES



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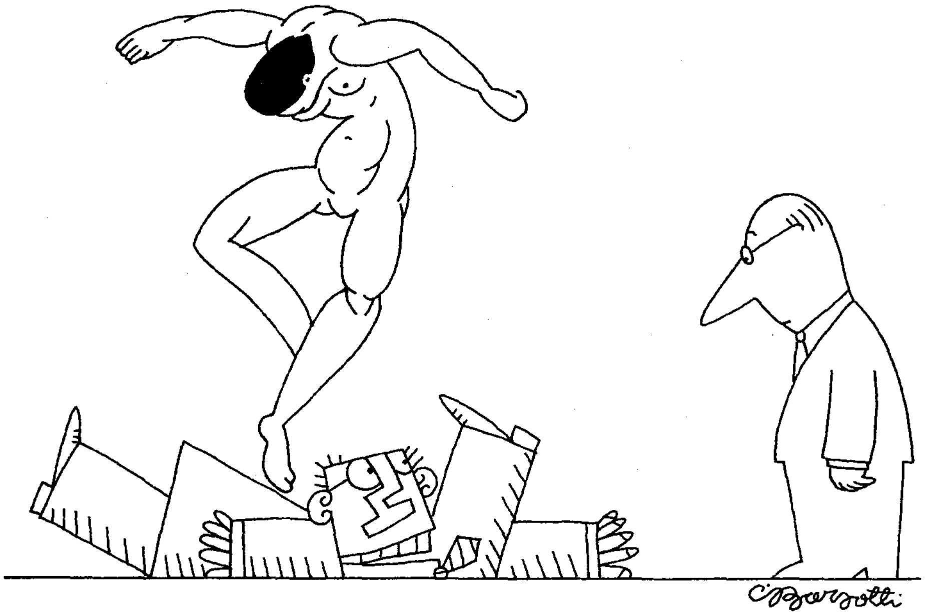


"I don't know a damn thing about art, but my back hasn't felt this good in years."

• •

bered Novy vaguely. Back in 1968, at the height of the Soviet invasion, he had smuggled himself into the already occupied Czechoslovak News Agency's downtown Prague offices with several riveting images of Soviet tanks barrelling down Wenceslas Square and being swarmed over by angry young demonstrators, and had managed to wire them to the U.P.I. offices in Vienna. The next day, they appeared on the front pages of newspapers all over the world. Nobody knew then who had taken them or how they had been spirited out of the country, but several months later they were nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, and U.P.I. got in touch with Novy, and asked if he now wanted their source made public.

"I said yes," Novy told me now. "And that was probably a mistake, because then the StB began seeking me out." Accompanied by Alan Levy—the editor of the English-language Prague *Post*, the only paper to announce that it would continue running Novy's work, despite his name's having shown up on the list—I had tracked him down at his apartment, in one of the town's outlying districts. Novy, too, was obviously shaken by the recent developments. He went on to recount, "I began getting harassed, and all my usual outlets started drying up—this is not the first time that this has happened to me. Once, in Brno, I was attacked and savagely beaten, until I fell unconscious on the street. Then they began taking me in for interrogation—ten separate times over just a few weeks. I was absolutely terrified. I knew that others had been disappeared. I had two small children. This was in 1973. I was at the end of my physical and spiritual strength. But then, in the middle of the interrogation, they just seemed to lose interest. They dragged me into a room at the Interior Ministry and they thrust a piece of paper in front of me declaring my loyalty to the regime and to the secret police; they told me to sign, saying that if I did it would all be over. And I did, I signed the sheet of paper, but I added a postscript, saying that this didn't mean I agreed with the Soviet invasion. And that was that. I wish they could find the actual document in my file—people could see for themselves. After I signed, the StB generally let me be. And I began to allow myself to imagine that after so many years I was finally out of their clutches."

Novy said that a few weeks before the list was leaked he had begun receiving hideously vulgar anonymous hate calls. A few days after the list was published, he got in touch with Interior Minister Jan Langos, a longtime and quite close friend. (They share profound religious convictions, he explained.) What is happening, he asked his old friend. What is happening to me?

"The line was weak," Novy recalled. "I could barely hear him. 'You know we are hunting *murderers*,' he told me. 'If you could only imagine, we have so many enemies here and from abroad—it's not easy, my friend. I've been rifling through these files for two years now, and I know what I'm talking about.' But what does this have to do with me, I asked. He said he didn't know my case—the list wasn't really his doing anyway, it was the F.B.I.S.'s. And I wasn't even calling him for his intercession. I didn't expect him to help me—he really can't, he's too much in the spotlight. I just wanted his explanation. But he couldn't say much. At the end, our conversation turned very philosophical, about sin and punishment and forgiveness. I told him I hardly recognized this Jehovah's voice I now heard in him. 'Antonin,' he said, signing off—he sounded completely exhausted—'please, really, call me more often.' It's terrible what contact with all that material is doing to those people."

I asked Novy why *he* thought that all this was happening to him—who it was that he held responsible for the whole lustration fever.

"Either it's the old mafia trying to unsettle and destabilize the country so as to cover their own tracks," he said, "or it's the new politicians trying to distract the country from serious economic problems and to open a space and gain some short-term advantage for themselves. Or it's a combination of the two." He paused, and then added, as if as an afterthought, "And really they're the same thing."

THIS was the backdrop against which Kavan was endeavoring to press his case. On February 25th (several weeks before the release of the list of journalists), when the Interior Ministry finally ruled on Jan Kavan's lustration application, the determination, to everyone's astonishment, came back StB negative. When Kavan, accompanied by Petr Uhl, went to the Ministry to pick up his certificate—in effect a conclusively clean bill of health—he says, a woman there told them that for the past two weeks the employees there had been talking of little else. They had twice been ordered by their superiors to re-check the registry, the master list, to make sure Kavan's name wasn't on it, she told him, but it wasn't—he was clean.

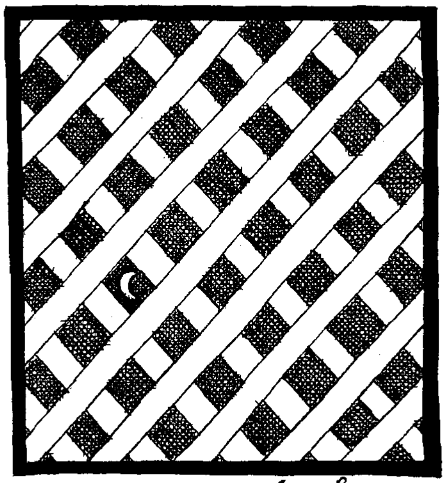
No sooner had Kavan begun exulting over such sweet vindication, however, than, just two days later, on February 27th, Interior Minister Jan Langos, obviously flustered, called a news conference to announce that there had been a terrible mistake—that Kavan was StB positive after all, under Category C. The evidence, he said, wasn't contained on the list so much as in the file itself. Supposedly, they'd finally cracked the "DS" code, and it stood for "*duverny styk*," which translated out as "a secret collaborator/confidential contact." Langos also said that the head of the committee that had mistakenly ruled otherwise had already been fired.

In the days that followed, Langos offered several contradictory accounts of how such a monumental foul-up could possibly have happened. Kavan, meanwhile, became the first Czech to possess two separate, equally binding lustration certificates—one vouching him to be StB negative, the other StB positive. (It occurred to me that Kafka was no longer the operative metaphor for Kavan's situation, so much as Dreyfus, with the state beginning to turn itself inside out trying to sustain an increasingly dubious fiat.)

Kavan, for his part, immediately appealed his StB-positive reclassification to Basta's Independent Commission. It turned out that his case had now joined that narrow band of cases over which the commission was empowered to rule. Among other things, Kavan would cite new evidence to the effect that the category "secret collaborator/confidential contact" didn't even exist in the StB lexicon during the period 1969-70, having come into use, if at all, only during the eighties. He also began mobilizing a string of witnesses on his behalf, both for his civil suit and for the Independent Commission hearing, including Shawcross, who, according to the file, had been one of the main subjects of Kavan's supposed informing but was still eager to testify on his behalf. Though both processes were likely to prove long and drawn-out, Kavan nevertheless remained grimly hopeful that his reputation might yet be redeemed.

Kavan's enemies, meanwhile, had clearly been spooked by his recent near-escape, and they prepared to launch a counter-offensive. They were immeasurably aided in this endeavor by the serendipitous fact that just a week later, on March 5th, back in London, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission did officially overturn part of its own 1985 finding in Kavan's favor in his complaint against Manyon and Thames Television—the first such action in its history. The new finding was relatively narrow in scope. Noting that even Kavan himself now admitted having been less than entirely forthright with the B.C.C. in his submissions during the original proceeding and specifically declining to accept "his explanation that he was justified in withholding this information by reason of the need to protect others," it annulled its anti-Manyon adjudication, which had been based in part on those submissions. As for Kavan's wider claims, the commissioners declined to revisit the case, in part because so much time had passed but mainly because Kavan had "already once, from whatever motive, misled the Commission."

Manyon was delighted with the outcome, which he saw as a vindication of his original report. He assured me that the language in the B.C.C.'s finding was by no means casual but had been based on voluminous submissions, including proof that there had indeed been a "secret organization," a fund-raising and channel-overseeing entity jointly headed by, among others, Kavan and Tigrid, with members both in and outside the country, many of whose names and addresses had indeed been on the captured *Svedectvi* list or in the uncoded letters—although not *as such*, not as contacts of the organization. Still, whether or not Kavan himself knew the specific details of his own distribution channel, this was the "organization" to which Manyon maintained he had been referring all along, and its members the "contacts" in question. "One might hope that this finding would put an end to matters once and for all," Manyon told me, "but I doubt it. Dealing with Kavan is like being confronted with one of those matryoshka dolls: every time you break through a layer of falsehood, there, underneath it, is another bright, shining lie—which may be smaller than the previous lie, but it's still a lie. The question is whether anyone can ultimately be bothered to get through to the last doll and see what's there." To some extent, it seemed to me, the whole painful, messy business was beginning to turn on a question of semantics—just what either of them had meant, implied, or imagined might be inferred, over ten years ago, from such terms as "secret organization" or "contact."

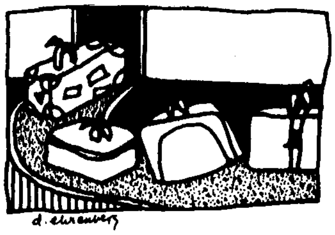

Anne Burgess

At any rate, back in Prague, Benjamin Kuras was now able to lead one of two scathing pieces he published in the March 9th issue of the rightist weekly *Respekt* with the sensational (and misleading) statement that in London the B.C.C. had just found Kavan "guilty of perjury." (Among the problems with this claim—which quickly assumed the status of established truth in most Prague circles—was that, as merely a quasi-judicial panel, the B.C.C. was in no position to find anybody "guilty of perjury," besides which their actual finding in the recent Kavan-Manyon case had been considerably more circumspect.)

Kavan suddenly found himself in a desperate trap, at least partly of his own making. Manyon and Thames had been able to use the possibly false accusation of Kavan's StB collaboration, back in Prague, as a part of their campaign to get the B.C.C. case reopened in London. And now it was going to be possible for Kavan's Prague enemies to use the B.C.C.'s inaccurately reported finding against him, to devastating effect. From here on, whenever Kavan tried to contest the charges of StB collaboration against him, his enemies would crow that "even the British courts" had declared him a liar, so why should anyone bother listening to him? It was an unmitigated mess—yet it was one that even Kavan's friends, shaking their heads in amazement, described as "quintessentially Kavanian."

Nor was that all. With Kavan thus hobbled, a ferocious campaign of press vilification was launched simultaneously in London and Prague. "WAS CZECH DISSIDENT SECRET POLICE INFORMER?" asked a banner headline above an article by John Sweeney in the March 8th Sunday *Observer*. ("File shows generation of UK radicals hoodwinked," the subhead replied.) Although Sweeney's article started out more or less judiciously, citing a few steadfast testimonials, it quickly abandoned that dispassionate tone. "Balanced against this sympathy for Kavan are hundreds of pages of raw detail in the Source Kato file—number 11777/307, later renumbered as 12402/332—which the *Observer* has seen," Sweeney wrote. Sweeney went on to offer several quite damaging details, such as the fact that the file included at least one receipt, actually signed by Kavan, for "30 pounds sterling" ("a figure with Biblical resonance," Sweeney insinuated darkly).

Most damning of all, perhaps, Sweeney reported the existence of "a video recording, taken in late November 1989, just after the Velvet Revolution," which "shows Kavan with two StB officers who he appeared to be acquainted with," continuing, "Kavan had just come from a meeting of Civic Forum, the dissidents' grouping. He talked, over a bottle of champagne, of hotel bookings: one of the secret policemen says: 'Let us say that we shall reserve accommodation for you for the next time. . . . On the 18th, then?' Kavan replies, 'Sometime after.' " Sweeney acknowledged that Kavan was claiming that "this, too, was a frame-up," but went on, in his final paragraph, to cite the B.C.C.'s adjudication "last week," quashing its original adjudication on the ground that Kavan had withheld information and misled the commission.



Kuras's *Respekt* piece covered much the same ground, though in considerably greater detail. (The *Respekt* and *Observer* pieces were so similar, in fact, that most assumed them to be part of a coördinated campaign. As to whose, journalists in London noted that Sweeney had once worked for Thames Television, while several witnesses in Prague claimed that Ben Kuras and Manyon were known to have been working together.) The file on which both Kuras and Sweeney had based most of their reporting was still supposed to be secret, its confidentiality sacrosanct (its leaking had technically constituted a crime, in fact, and Kavan himself still didn't have a complete copy), but this did not prevent others from selectively mining its contents. (One observer pointed out that the StB archives seemed to be becoming "a veritable lending library" for certain well-connected, politically correct journalists.) When I asked a lustration supporter about the propriety of such leaks, he explained that the state had to defend itself against the claims of all those unjustly protesting their innocence.

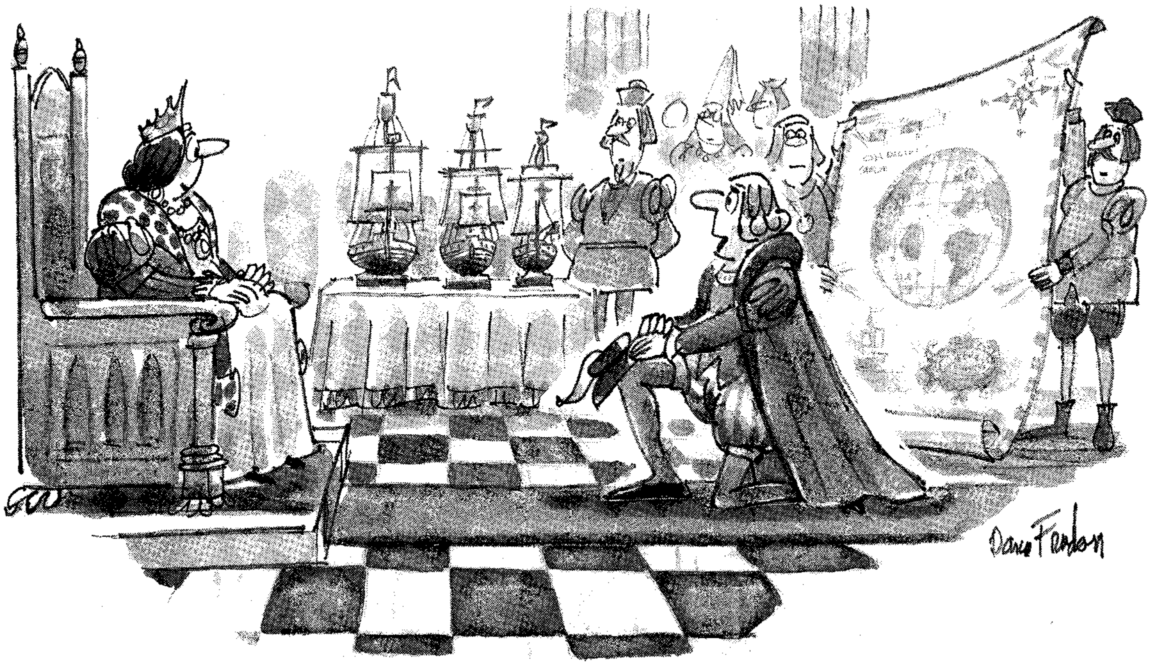
Although the *Observer* did eventually print a rebuttal letter by Kavan, only two Czech papers, the English-language Prague *Post* and the ex-Communist *Rude Pravo*, made more than the briefest reference to his continuing protestations. "Why should we?" I was challenged on more than one occasion. "He's a proven perjurer." Perhaps even more disconcerting, not a single Czech paper—once again with the exception of the *Post* and *Rude Pravo*—gave any substantial attention to a dramatic move in Kavan's defense that occurred on March 18th: the release of a petition, signed by twenty-five top former dissidents, angrily protesting "the current media campaign" against him and pronouncing it "incompatible with the principles of civic and journalistic ethics and law."

The campaign was proving dauntingly effective. Kavan's entire life was being splayed open and combed for intimations of treachery. The trouble was that, while much of this coverage was manifestly unfair, some of the revelations were profoundly disquieting, even to many of Kavan's most fervent supporters. A third- or fourth-generation copy of that video excerpt from the "champagne interrogation" was making the rounds—I, too, got a chance to see it—and, though the sound quality was poor, the scene itself was sickening, and, frankly, I found it difficult to square with any simple account of Kavan's innocence.

I WENT back to talk to Kavan, this time at his office. I wanted to explore a couple of the more damning allegations in the recent flood—for starters, the question of the receipts in his 1969-1970 file.

"Does anybody seriously believe that I would have betrayed my friends, my ideals, the memory of my father, for 'thirty pounds sterling,' as Sweeney puts it?" Kavan said. "I mean, obviously there are people who do believe it, or who infer that there must have been other payments, even though there are only two such receipts in the whole file. Again, I was meeting with my Embassy's education attaché. I was head of the Union of Czech Students and had certain legitimate expenses—the rental of a meeting hall, for example—for which I applied for reimbursement. Regarding that specific receipt, it happens that Mr. Zajicek has testified about it in open court. He finally did testify in my sporadically ongoing civil case, by the way—a fact that was nowhere reflected in this recent spate of articles."

Kavan slid open a desk drawer, riffled through some papers, and extracted a transcript of Zajicek's testimony. "It happens his memory differs from mine. He says that that receipt covered expenses related to a news bulletin I was preparing on Palach's then recent suicide and funeral. That would be even better for me, but I think he's mistaken. Unlike me, he didn't have access to the file, and, after all, it has been twenty-three years. In this particular instance, I believe I was being partly reimbursed for some of the money that had been improperly confiscated from me several months earlier, when I was attempting to leave Czechoslovakia for my second term at Oxford. But the key passage in his testimony is here. 'In conclusion,' he says, 'I would like to add that I did not at any time try to recruit Mr. Kavan for any collaboration with the secret police, either verbally or in written form. I never mentioned to him during our meetings anything about my other [StB] role in the Embassy. Indeed, I couldn't have done so without risking not only disciplinary but also criminal sanction.' And there is this other passage here, incidentally, where he ex-



"Your Majesty, my voyage will not only forge a new route to the spices of the East but also create over three thousand new jobs."

• •

plains aspects of the StB's internal record-keeping system. 'Files starting with the number one,' he says, 'refer to "objects of interest," whereas files starting with the number four refer to agents. As you can see, Mr. Kavan's file started with a one. By the way, I already explained this to the people at the November 17th Commission,' he says, 'and they chose to ignore it.' So did all the recent so-called journalists, including Sweeney. Of course, my enemies will simply claim that as an StB agent Zajicek is now trying to protect his old colleague. But this *was* public testimony, under oath."

And what of the famous videotape of his own interrogation by the StB in November of 1989? I told him that I had seen it, and had found it deeply distressing.

"First off, when I arrived, I was not whisked past the regular customs control at the airport by happily expectant StB officers, as some of the reports now have it," he began. "I happen to have a witness, a British journalist who was standing in line right in front of me right up to the moment I presented my passport, apparently setting off alarm bells, and was then shunted aside. Second, the ensuing twelve hours of interrogation was videotaped in its entirety. And what I'd like to know is: Where is *that* videotape? If they have the one, they must have the other, and why don't they release *it*, too? As I've told you, the tenor of that interrogation was much more tense and confrontational. At the end of it, as they decided to let me into the country after all, they instructed me not to mention our conversation to anyone—instructions I broke the following day, telling Petr Uhl about it right away as we embraced. He remembers my doing so, although, as he says, it was the least of his concerns at that euphoric moment, as was my question of how I ought to proceed if I were to be picked up again, as indeed I was. *Not*, as Mr. Sweeney has it, having 'just come from a meeting of Civic Forum.' I was dragged out of bed at 7 A.M. at my hotel—again, I have a witness, the hotel's desk clerk—escorted out to a waiting car, and driven to a villa in Prague 6. There I was questioned by three men, one of whom, just as Sweeney says, I 'appeared to be acquainted with': he'd been one of the guys at the airport. The senior official, who did most of the talking, I'd never met before.

"They had me sit at a particular spot on the sofa—so, I now realize, I'd be facing their hidden camera. Has anyone figured out why they were bothering to videotape me if I was such a trusted collaborator of theirs? Anyway, this time the tone was much friendlier, almost cordial. Things had already proceeded well along in the outside world, and this almost had the feel of a conversation among generals after battle, as the saying goes. The main guy had a thick file in front of him—presumably the one that has now disappeared—and he leafed through it, periodically asking questions about my finances, for instance, and mainly, it seemed, trying to impress me with how much they knew about me, although almost all their information could be accounted for in various after-the-fact ways. At one point, however, they did make reference to something that had happened in London which really surprised me—I couldn't figure out how they knew, whom they could have got it from.

"Anyway, halfway through, the one guy says, 'Do you want whiskey or champagne?'—like that. I could have kicked, made a fuss. I didn't. But I didn't see any reason to be confrontational, and why not accept a glass of champagne? At some point, one of them made a casual toast—'To the future,' or something. I didn't think much about it: the future *was* on all our minds. Conversation turned to my own future plans. I said I had to go back to London briefly but would be returning. They became very solicitous, offering me accommodations. I played along—in part because they still did control the border and I was worried they wouldn't let me back in, but also because I had this silly idea that I might be able to get them to reveal their London contact if I asked how they were going to get word to me in London about any eventual accommodations. I was stupid. But one of my fellow-oppositionists recently commented on how he and the others were also always doing the same sort of thing—playing games with them during the interrogations. Anyway, nothing came of it."

Kavan went on, "The video of the entire session was in the safe at the November 17th Commission, but it was only that one short section—the part that casts me in the most awkward light—that got leaked. There are members of Parliament who have seen the whole thing, however—Petr Uhl, for one—and he tells me that at a certain point on the tape I get up and go to the bathroom and the two StB guys are talking to each other, evaluating my performance, and one of them says something like 'In any case, he's still lying to us.' And what I want to know is: Why didn't they leak *that* passage? It's all so preposterous."

ON one of my last days in Prague, I visited the Interior Ministry headquarters, a dour modern white edifice on the outskirts of the town's central district. Langos himself was declining all interviews in the run-up to the coming elections, but the deputy minister, Jan Ruml, indicated that he would be willing to see me. Ruml—the son of the veteran dissident Jiri Ruml, who had chaired the November 17th Commission—was himself a veteran oppositionist. In fact, he had been a key link in Kavan's secret distribution network, and, as such, had been one of the principal figures ensnared by the StB as a result of the notorious 1981 van incident. He ended up serving a year in jail on account of it. It was going to be interesting to see to what extent, if any, he retrospectively held Kavan responsible for that ordeal.

The waiting room outside Ruml's office was decorated in the standard-issue mid-Communist-era manner—thick Naugahyde-padded door, blond wood sofas with orange foam cushions. The tall young man who presently emerged from the inner office, however, his shoulders stooped, his manner soft and deferential, was anything but standard issue. Nor could I imagine the inner offices of any other high security-service official anywhere in the world done up with quite the same brio. Large, bold, vigorously colorful abstract canvases graced each of Ruml's walls. ("My old friends used to come visit me during my first days here," he explained, smiling, "and they'd see how depressed I was, how depressing this place is, and they launched a campaign to rescue my spirits.") Ruml, who was wearing a rumpled green jacket over a black T-shirt and sported a full, bearish brown beard, would, it seemed to me, have looked more at home in Greenwich Village. (His boss, Langos, with his black stringy hair cascading messily down below his shoulders, for his part had looked as if he might have come tumbling straight out of Woodstock or the Haight.) On second thought, maybe this *was* the new standard in Eastern Europe—apparent hippies heading Interior Ministries. Still, one could easily be fooled by appearances, for these same hippies almost invariably turned out to be ardent fans of Reagan and Thatcher, their discourse festooned with references to Hayek and Friedman. Ruml would soon be quitting his Interior Ministry post to take up a prominent slot on the electoral slate of Klaus's O.D.S. party.

BAR
Victoria Roberts

"I'm a beggar in the house of love."

I asked him what it had been like when he first arrived in this office. "It was terrible," he said. "This was April of 1990—up to then, for the first six months of the Velvet Revolution, the old StB had continued to have pretty much free run of the place, and you could still feel the ruling spirit. In fact, most of the old people were still here. And it was my first task to dissolve the StB as an organization. During the past two and a half years, we've released eight thousand of the old employees."

This meant that he had been one of the people who uncovered, collected, and secured the surviving StB registries and files. That, too, he said, had been an excruciating experience—repeatedly coming upon the names of trusted old friends in the various registries. "It was always the same," Ruml recalled. "I would confront them privately, and invariably they'd deny it. I'd dig deeper into the files, pulling up their personal records and there you'd find all the evidence—the signed documents, the receipts, and so forth—and I'd confront them again, and they'd break down crying, admitting it, offering up their various excuses. It was all very painful. I even found out the name of the man who was responsible for betraying our operation back in 1981 and sending me to prison."

Kavan?

“Oh, no, no, there's no evidence that Kavan was working for them at that time. No. The fellow who betrayed us was one of our most trusted collaborators here inside the country, a Charter signatory who'd spent four years in prison—that's probably where they got to him somehow. In fact, it turns out he was working for the Soviets, for the K.G.B.—some of the key documents in his file were signed in Russian—and he'd been assigned specifically to infiltrate and upend our distribution channel. He was in Parliament at the time we made the discovery, and when we confronted him he resigned and quietly slipped into private life. It was all very painful, as I say, but also a relief, because up to then we still hadn't been able to figure out what had happened, how our security had been breached.”

What about Kavan?

“Kavan was a person who for a long period, especially before 1981, helped us very much in keeping up contact with the world outside—both the world of exile and the world of our potential international sympathizers. At the same time, he was a very contradictory person.”

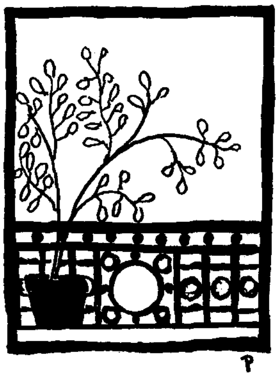
Although Ruml had disapproved of Kavan's secret trips to Czechoslovakia in the later eighties, he didn't seem to feel that either they or the StB video of his November, 1989, interrogation constituted serious evidence of Kavan's latter-day collusion with the StB. He didn't understand or approve of Kavan's politics—but that was not the issue. He had worked successfully with others whose politics he disdained. No, as far as this top security official was concerned—a man who, after all, had had open access to all the files and data involved—the case against Kavan largely boiled down to the question of his behavior during 1969 and 1970. “And, having carefully reviewed the files, I've made a determination that Kavan must have known that he was dealing with an StB agent in 1969-70, during those contacts with the Embassy's education officer,” Ruml concluded. “I don't think he would have continued much longer, no matter what—as you know, the education officer was himself recalled to Prague by late summer of 1970—and maybe he just imagined himself to be playing some kind of game, thinking he could outsmart or manipulate them, or something. I've seen hundreds of cases like that. In fact, that's maybe the most frequent motive.”

And ought that to be cause enough for lustration?

“He was labelled a person who knew he was collaborating with the StB,” Ruml declared, stiffening noticeably. “I myself would not have been terribly concerned about this, especially in Kavan's case. According to the file, he did not offer them any substantive information, or anything that could have harmed others. But the November 17th Commission came to the conclusion that he collaborated knowingly, and if he says he did not, then he's lying, and *that's* why he shouldn't be in Parliament.” Ruml seemed very pleased with that formulation.

But, I persisted, if all he was doing was playing games . . .

“I believe that those who knowingly collaborated, even if they did nothing harmful, even if they were just playing games, should be lustrated. It's difficult for you in the States to understand this—you didn't live for forty years under Communist rule. This regime destroyed all of us; we have all been to a greater or lesser extent tainted—even those of us in the opposition. We are attempting some kind of moral cleanup here, to clean the society of those who morally compromised themselves. And one of the criteria we're using is that people not have knowingly collaborated with the StB—it's as simple as that. Kavan did, and if he says he didn't then he's lying; and, furthermore, by taking his case internationally, the way he's doing, he's undermining the reputation of the country, and that's another reason he deserves to be lustrated.”



“THAT'S nonsense,” Zuzana Blüh declared, with utter finality, as I began to relate one of several theories I had heard about Kavan's possible motives in collaborating with Zajicek, the London Embassy's StB operative, back in 1969. Blüh was serving as Petr Uhl's deputy at the Czechoslovak News Agency, and we were meeting in her office. A stylish woman with a helmet of thick black hair, black squarish glasses, a black-and-white plaid jacket over a black dress, and a broad, easy smile, she went on to say that the reason Kavan had had anything at all to do with Zajicek was quite simple: he had been ordered to. As the only S.V.S. student-union officer resident in Britain, he had been empowered by the S.V.S. executive board in Prague to represent Czechoslovak students stranded after the invasion. And the reason she knew this for certain was that she was the one who had delivered the mandate.

“It was 1969, and the situation was getting more critical,” she recalled. “The S.V.S. had moved into open opposition against the regime, and the regime was moving to have us banished—things were very tense. At the same time, we *were* a student union, and we were supposed to be representing students in their everyday interests. And so—I remember it vividly, spring of 1969, because it was my first trip West—I arrived with power of attorney for our man, Jan Kavan, and instructions for him to found a branch of our union there. Identical things were happening in other places. I was present at the meeting of Czech students where he was elected chairman. And I remember telling him afterward to go to the Embassy—that it would now be one of his responsibilities to serve as liaison for all these students with the education officer there. Luckily, I didn't have time to go there myself that day, or I'm sure I'd have got listed as a collaborator as well. But he came back, he told me about this sympathetic diplomat he had met there who seemed to share many of our views. And so, over the months ahead, he opened up to him a bit. Big deal.”

Had she read the Kavan file?

“Aha!” she exclaimed. “This I want *on the record*.” Up to then we'd been weaving in and out, onto and off the record. “*This* I want on the record,” she repeated. “Three hundred M.P.s have had access to that file, a copy is circulating in Britain, other copies are circulating among journalists here, totally illegally. And I was told by somebody who saw the file—and, incidentally, was breaking the official-secrets act even telling me this much—that it looks as follows. It has an index at the front, and my name figures third in the number of references. You see, it's not simply his file, as such; there are subfiles folded into it on various contacts of his, such as me. There's a whole subfile on me—whom I met, what I ate, whom I allegedly slept with. There are reports by all sorts of agents, and analyses by other agents. And a minimum of three hundred people—most of whom I don't know, and many of whom I don't trust in the least—are pawing over this material, titillating themselves. And me, I don't even get to read it at all, the law denies me any access—that is, until suddenly I'm reading all about myself, totally out of context, without explanation, in the pages of *Respekt*."

Shaking her head, she said, "It's amazing. Amazing. Disgusting. And, on top of everything else, they got it all wrong. Every single detail about my alleged love life they got wrong. If the rest of the file is anywhere near as reliable as what they had to say about my love life—well, then . . . "

Her voice trailed off. "And this is what gets treated as holy writ in this country," she resumed. "Agents speculating and cross-analyzing the prurient speculations of other agents. This is what gets treated as unshakable, unquestionable truth—this, this garbage. This is what we're doing to ourselves in this country with this crazy lustration process."

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On my last evening in Prague, I was talking with Helena Klimova, a psychotherapist, in her consulting office, and I asked her about Kavan, whom she, too, had known in his days as a student radical.

"I don't think he's anywhere near as bad as he often gets portrayed here nowadays," she began. "I think he was really very efficient—he did a tremendous amount. At the same time, though, he regularly made tremendous mistakes. In part, this is understandable, in that he was doing a very difficult and dangerous job, with no prior experience or training. People forget that: he had no one to teach him how to do all those things; most of the people he was collaborating with, his friends, were back here, so he was largely on his own. But, at the same time, there was this other aspect of the matter, in that he is not too stable psychologically—in part owing to the legacy of his father's terrible persecution. I think that in a sense he felt compelled to continue in the steps of this father he had idealized enormously. He did his best, but no one could have lived up to such an ideal—still, he'd take bigger and bigger risks trying to do so. So he became capable of both heroic things and terrible mistakes—a very risky personality."

She went on, "Even back in our student days, he seemed consumed by this inner turmoil, and he's the kind of person who tends to project his personal chaos onto the society around him, the society at large. And maybe the reason his case is causing so many difficulties in Czechoslovakia these days is that Czech society is currently manifestly irrational itself."

I asked Klimova what she thought of the lustration process generally in this context.

"Its initial motivation was a healthy one, it seems to me, this need for a sense of justice," she replied. "Only, we missed the opportunity for real justice, and lustration now serves as a kind of facsimile. At the very outset, you see, there was this consensus: we wanted justice, but we didn't want to be like them. What we really wanted to hear from the Communists was an expression of sorrow or contrition, some kind of confession, after which we'd have been prepared to forgive. We wanted to forgive, I think. But the forgiveness came too soon. There was anxiety at the very top, among people like Havel and Czech Premier Pithart and Foreign Minister Dienstbier. They stopped various attempts at wholesale purges: *we weren't going to be like them.* And then the Communists stopped confessing before they even started. Instead, they became all puffed up with their success—their economic success, for example. They were shameless, and people got angry, and that's when the cry for punishment began to be heard."

The room was darkening. I could hardly see her anymore in the gloom.

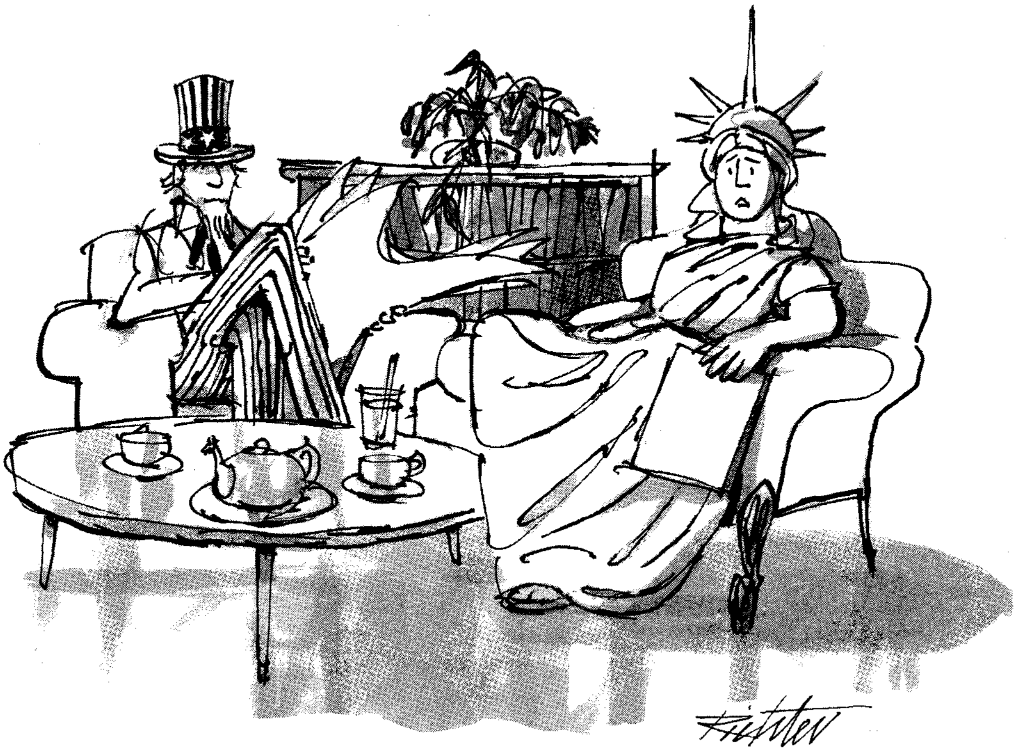
"What happened then is comparable to obsessive neurotic behavior in individuals," she went on. "Such patterns usually start when a person has an aim that for some reason can't be reached, and instead you get a series of ersatz fulfillments of that aim, as in bulimia, for instance. In our case, we binge on these lists, ever larger lists—only, they are hollow, because what can you say about these supposed master lists of informers? Isn't the whole point that the masters of the list aren't on the master list? It's all phony. The impulse isn't phony. It's quite authentic, it needs to be addressed. But the execution in this instance is empty, the justice is ersatz."

The room had gone completely dark. Outside, meagre street lamps were flickering feebly to life.

"And in the middle of all this you have Kavan," Klimova concluded. "Kavan, with his propensity for complication and self-destructiveness. It's as if Kavan and the society were feeding on each other." She sighed, collecting her thoughts. "Still, Kavan really shouldn't be in politics—he is a type of personality, this risky type, that shouldn't be in politics. I know, it's a terrible thing to say—almost tragic, in a way—because politics has been the basis of his whole life. But he should not try to be in public life."

It was a moot point. Kavan wasn't going to be in politics much longer in any case. No party invited him onto its list in the coming election. None could afford to: it was generally assumed that Kavan's inclusion on any party's slate would doom that party's entire list. He sat out the campaign grimly.

Lists continued leaking, ever more "complete" versions—until finally over a hundred and fifty thousand names were in varying degrees of circulation. Kavan's was emblematic of a plethora of national dramas—by no means an isolated case. In Slovakia, the lustration strategy was proving decidedly ineffectual. During the later stages of the campaign, it seemed, the more his opponents asserted Vladimir Meciar's alleged former ties to the StB, the more popular he became among a Slovak population tired of being bullied by its Czech counterpart, and eventually his forces there triumphed overwhelmingly. On the other hand, back in the Czech lands the lustration strategy has proved astonishingly effective. Virtually none of the former dissidents made it back into the



"Sometimes I think I'd serve the nation better at the approach to Kennedy International."

new Parliament. The moderate social-democratic O.H. faction, led by Dienstbier and Pithart (and sentimentally favored, it was thought, by the officially neutral Havel), failed even to clear the five-per-cent-minimum threshold required for any sort of inclusion in the Parliament. (During the final days of the campaign, Dienstbier's own posters were being defaced by opponents who cleverly circled the "stb" in the middle of his name.) But that threshold also eluded Pavel Bratinka's right-wing O.D.A. faction, at least at the federal level: here it wasn't so much that he had been tarred with the StB brush as that his distinguished career in the oppositionist underground no longer counted for anything; it had been bled of its authority, in part through his collusion in the lustration campaign. If people were going to vote for full-throttle capitalism, they would rather have the charismatic Klaus's O.D.S. version, his indifferent prior career notwithstanding. Furthermore, in the end the growing support for Klaus and Meciar in their respective polities seemed to have a reciprocal effect: the stronger Meciar seemed to grow in Slovakia, the more Klaus was able to cast himself as that particular bogeyman's only truly credible opponent, and vice versa. By the time of the election, June 5th and 6th, Klaus and Meciar, with their diametrically opposed visions of the country's future, emerged as the two big winners. And after that the country itself began to fracture. Unable to avert disunion, Havel resigned as President; and Klaus and Meciar now entered into edgy negotiations aiming at a January, 1993, divorce of their two polities. Meciar largely suspended the lustration program in Slovakia. Klaus's O.D.S., meanwhile, quickly moved to consolidate its hegemony over the Czech side of the divide: Petr Uhl was fired as director general of the Czechoslovak News Agency; Jan Ruml was appointed interior minister; Miroslav Macek, the co-publisher of *Telegraf*, was named federal deputy prime minister and quickly became embroiled in a front-page scandal amid allegations that he was exploiting his government position for personal financial gain.

Kavan, for his part, continued his personal crusade, trying to clear his name. I received regular updates—insanely detailed faxes analyzing each new turn in his elusive quest for vindication, which is to say that he was now lavishing upon his own case the same care and thoroughness that he used to expend on all the others'. And of course, it suddenly occurred to me, that was probably at least part of the whole idea all along: his enemies had effectively neutralized him. The civil-court case seemed to have become permanently bogged down in judicial evasions regarding standing, venue, precedent, parliamentary immunity, and the like. So, increasingly, Kavan was pinning his hopes on Basta's Independent Commission. But even there—and despite the fact that regulations provided for conclusive judgment one way or the other within sixty days—closure was being endlessly deferred. Basta personally subpoenaed key records from the Interior Ministry, but the records never materialized.

Finally, last month, on September 15th, Kavan himself was invited to present a defense before the commission—his first such opportunity in any quasi-judicial setting. He prepared tirelessly for the occasion, arriving, as ordered, at 8:30 A.M. But the commissioners themselves failed to show up—or enough of them, anyway. For this hearing, on what was easily the most controversial such case in the entire country, Basta found himself falling one short of the required quorum. Finally, just before eleven, a tardy commissioner wandered in. Kavan immediately launched into his defense, but before he could complete it another of the commission's members announced that he had to leave, and the whole proceeding had to be adjourned.

Basta himself clearly seemed to have come to a determination that Kavan was innocent (for one thing, he noted, Kavan's was proving to be the *only* file in the entire archive with the mysterious "DS" designation, so that it couldn't even be considered an authentic category, whatever it was). With increasing exasperation, Basta tried to explain to several of the commission's younger members the subtleties of oppositional life in 1969 and 1970—but they were having none of it. For them, it was cut and dried: by even having allowed himself to be in the same room as the Communist education attaché, Kavan had proved his guilt, as far as they were concerned. The question seemed hopelessly politicized, and the commissioners, at least in this instance, seemed anything but independent.

The commission is now planning to take up Kavan's appeal once again, on October 16th. Whether it will be able to muster the required quorum at that time is another matter. Many observers now suspect that the Independent Commission will simply continue failing to achieve that required quorum until January, when it will be dissolved, along with the federal governmental entity to which it was supposed to answer.

Basta himself, meanwhile, has decided to refer the entire question of lustrating anyone in Category C (with its minuscule DS sub-category) back to the Parliament; he feels that the entire category should be eliminated. Unable to gather the votes necessary to clear Kavan outright through his own commission, he seems to feel he might be able to help Kavan squirm clear through such a technicality. Kavan, of course, would prefer—and insists he deserves—a straight determination.

Kavan was describing all this to me over the phone the other day, and he seemed forlorn. At one point, I asked him why he even bothered anymore. Why keep bashing his head against that wall?

I heard him sigh—a sigh, it seemed, from way back. "My passion to clear my name is at this point very much for my children's sake," he finally said. "For my newborn baby daughter, Monika, and also for Caroline, my seventeen-year-old daughter back in England, and for my eleven-year-old son, Michael, here in Prague. Their opinion matters enormously to me. And, while I do not think they could ever believe that I ever served as an informer, some of their friends might, and they could be made to feel uncomfortable. You see, that's something I know all about. I'm not so much battling for their hearts or their minds as for their peace of mind." ♦

ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK

HAIL TO THE CHIEFS

by Morgan Monceaux

MORGAN MONCEAUX, an artist who has been homeless for part of his career, was born forty-four years ago, in Alexandria, Louisiana. His mother was a singer, his father a chef. He went to Bishop College, where he studied music and theology, and hoped to become a jazz singer. Then his life began to take unexpected turns. He was drafted into the Navy, and served during the Vietnam War. After his discharge, he gave up singing, and for most of the next twenty years he wandered. About two years ago, he came to New York. "I was looking forward to living in New York," he says. "I liked the excitement, and at first I liked the dirt. Honestly."

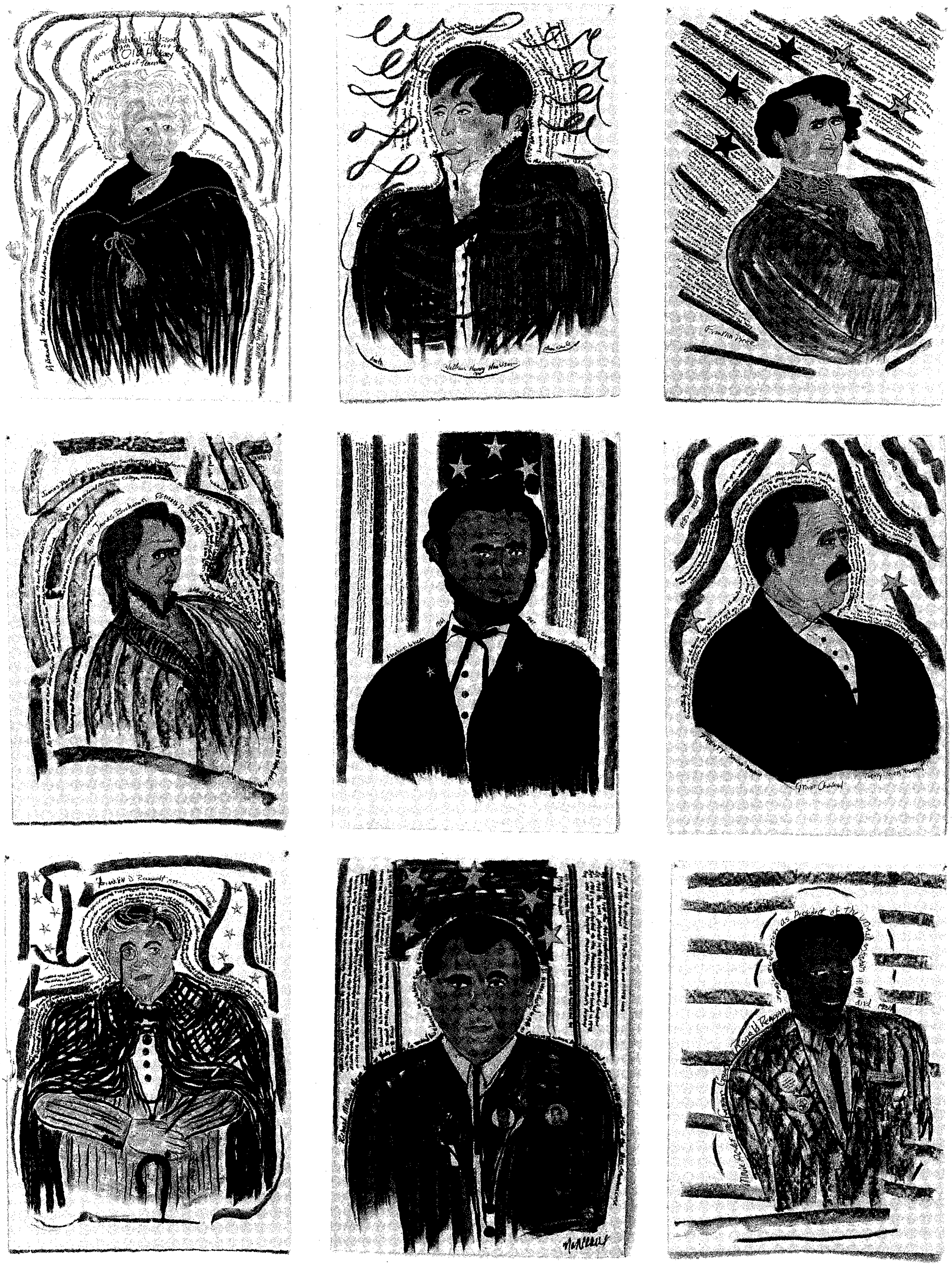
Within a year, however, he found himself without a place to live, and he remained without a home for most of the next twelve months. "It was interesting," he says today. "Like all homeless people, I had never imagined myself living in that way. I think that what happens is that people with homes think of homeless people as though they were *born* that way. Your strongest emotion when you are homeless is bewilderment. How did this happen to me? There were many nights when I thought, *Is* this happening to me? You manage, though."

During that time, Morgan Monceaux began to be possessed by a peculiar ambition: to draw a portrait of every American President, from George Washington to George Bush. "I'm a history buff, and my focus has been African-American history," he says. "I was interested in the idea that a couple of Presidents had had African-American ancestry. One thing led to another, and, though I had no real place to work, I thought, I'll draw the Presidents."

Earlier this year, he found work out in East Hampton, as the janitor of a night club called Lil's, on Three-Mile Harbor Road. He also found a place to live, in a little shack near the railroad tracks in Southampton, and began, at last, to work on his Presidents. "The first President I completed was John Quincy Adams," he says. "One thing led to another, and then another. It was my first time working with oil pastels, a totally new medium for me."

Most of Monceaux's portraits were enlivened with small collage elements—bits of lace trim and silk ribbon and old campaign buttons that he had collected over the years on visits to flea markets. Emanating from the head and torso of each President is a halo of words: Monceaux's account, in tiny, barely legible printing, of the life, career, and essential character of *his subject. Monceaux's Presidents, which* were on view in September at Morgan Rank's gallery of American art, in East Hampton, are a unique meditation on American history. Instead of trying for a simple likeness, they seek some hidden, expressive element of the Presidential character: Andrew Jackson, spectral and impassioned, his cloak wrapped around him, looking like the ghost of Hamlet's father; James Buchanan, shrivelled and mournful, the approaching Civil War concentrated into a single band of worry across his forehead; Ronald Reagan, all pompadour and used-car salesman's grin; Franklin Roosevelt, his own stern features somehow melded with the gentler ones of Eleanor. Monceaux has an affection for the failed—or, at any rate, the least famous—Presidents, and he has a particular liking for John Quincy Adams ("His concept of public service has been rarely, if ever, surpassed. He was more interested in being right and in the general good than he was in gaining popularity and in extending political patronage"), Grover Cleveland ("The country was changing, but he managed to keep it from changing for the worse, which a lesser man might not have done"), and William McKinley ("It is not as though William McKinley were without memorials. You may not get to see one very often, but his picture is on the five-hundred-dollar bill").

"People always ask me why I don't do pretty paintings," Monceaux says. "I think all my work is pretty in its way. I just want to give facts. I record facts as they are, and not my own personal ideas. We all have ideas about what the Presidents stand for, and how they wanted to bring change. But they were also men who had faults, and their own personalities. You know what's funny? What's funny is that while I was doing all this it *never* occurred to me that this was an election year. I had sort of lost track of politics." —ADAM GOPNIK


Old Hickory
William Henry Harrison
Franklin Pierce
Grover Cleveland
Ronald Reagan
Monceaux

MONCEAUX'S PRESIDENTS. *Top row, left to right:* Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, Franklin Pierce. *Center row:* James Buchanan, Abraham Lincoln, Grover Cleveland. *Bottom row:* Franklin D. Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan.

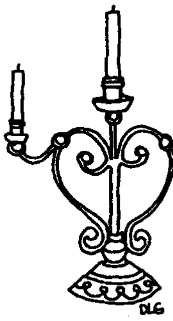
FICTION

ZALLA

by Ann Beattie

RECENTLY, I had reason to think about Thomas Kurbell—Little Thomas, as the family always called him. Little Thomas fooled the older members of the family for a while because he was so polite as a child—almost obsequious—and because his father, Thomas, Sr., had been a genuinely nice man. Ours was an urban family, based in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., and Little Thomas's father's death reinforced every bit of paranoia everyone had about life in the country. No matter that he actually died of complications of pneumonia, which he had contracted in the hospital as he was lying in traction, recovering from a broken leg, shattered ankle, and patched-together pelvis, suffered after falling from a hay wagon. Legend had it that he'd died instantly from the fall, and this was always invoked as a cautionary warning to any youngster in the family who took an interest in skiing or sailing or even hiking. For the sake of storytelling, Thomas, Sr.,'s death often dovetailed into the long-ago death of his cousin Pete, who had been struck by lightning when he got out to investigate a backup on the Brooklyn Bridge: Wham! With Thomas still sliding out of the hay wagon, there was a sudden bolt of electricity and Pete, moved to New York City, was struck dead, lit up for such a quick second it seemed somebody was just taking a picture with a flash. I suppose it's true in many families that some things get to be lumped together for effect, and others to obscure some issue. I was thirty years old before I got the chronology of the two deaths correct. It's just the way people in our family tell stories: it wasn't done to mislead Little Thomas.

Little Thomas was a sneaky child. He'd sneak around for no good reason, padding through the house in his socks, sometimes scaring his mother and his sister Lilly when they turned a corner and found him standing there like a statue. His mother always said Little Thomas had no radar. No instinct for avoiding people and things. His going around in his socks made things worse, because if you were frightened and yelped he would become frightened, too, and burst into tears or topple something from a table in his fright. But he wouldn't wear shoes in the house—to get even with his mother, he said, for making him wear boots to school on days when it wasn't even raining, only damp—and no amount of pleading or punishment could make him change his ways. As he got older, he deliberately frightened his sister from time to time, because he loved to see her jump, but most of the scares with his mother were unintentional, he later maintained.



Little Thomas's mother was named Etta Sue. She was five years older than my mother, Alice Dawn Rose. There was a brother in between, who had died of rheumatic fever. Though Etta Sue married a man named Thomas Kurbell, she maintained that Little Thomas was named not for him but for her dead brother, Thomas Wyatt. Little Thomas's middle name was Nathaniel. "She put that name in because she wanted to include everybody, even the milkman," Thomas, Sr., used to say. Apparently, the milkman was a subject of fond kidding between them: she really did like the milkman, and he became a family friend. He'd push open the back door, come in and wipe off the milk bottles before putting them on the top shelf of the refrigerator, and then pour himself some tea and sit and talk to whoever happened to be in the kitchen—Thomas, Sr.; my mother, on a visit; me. He was Nat the Milkman. One time when I wasn't there, Little Thomas jumped out of the broom closet and startled Nat the Milkman, and Nat grabbed him and flipped him over, holding him upside down by his ankles for a good long while. This was the reason Little Thomas hated him.

As well as slipping around in his stocking feet, Little Thomas was quiet and rarely could be coaxed into a conversation. He was quiet and troubled—that much the family would finally allow, though they refused to admit that there were any *real* problems. It was said he was troubled because he'd had to wear glasses as a child. Or because his father was so personable that he'd presented his son with a hard act to follow. Later, Little Thomas's asthma was blamed, and then his guilt over the fact that Punkin Puppy, the family's russet-colored mutt, had to be given away because of Little Thomas's allergies. Growing up, I heard these things over and over. The reasons were like a mantra, or like the stages of grief being explained—the steps from denial to acceptance. By the time he was a teen-ager, it was no longer a question just of his being troubled but of his actively troubling others. Garden hoses were turned on in the neighbors' gardens late at night, washing their flowers away in great landslides of mud; brown bags filled with dog excrement were set burning on some neighbor's porch, so whoever opened the door would be ankle-deep in dog shit when he stomped out the flames. Things got worse, and then Little Thomas was sent away to a special school.

YESTERDAY I visited my mother in her new apartment in Alexandria. She was afraid of crime in downtown Washington and thought she should relocate. Her nurse-companion came with her, a kindhearted woman named Zalla, who attended the school of nursing at American University two nights a week and every summer. When she got her nursing degree, Zalla intended to return to her home, Belize, where she was going to work in a hospital. The hospital was still under construction. Building had to be stopped when the architect was accused of embezzling; then the hurricane struck. But Zalla had faith that the hospital would be completed, that she would eventually graduate from nursing school, and that—though this went unsaid—she would not be with my mother forever. My mother has emphysema and diabetes, and needs someone with her. Zalla cooks and washes and does any number of things no one expects her to do, and during the day she's never off her feet. At night she watches James Bond movies over and over on my mother's VCR. My mother sits in the TV room with her, rereading Dickens. She says the James Bond movies provide wonderful soundtracks for the stories. Carly Simon singing "Nobody Does It Better" in "The Spy Who Loved Me" as my mother's reading about Mr. Pickwick.

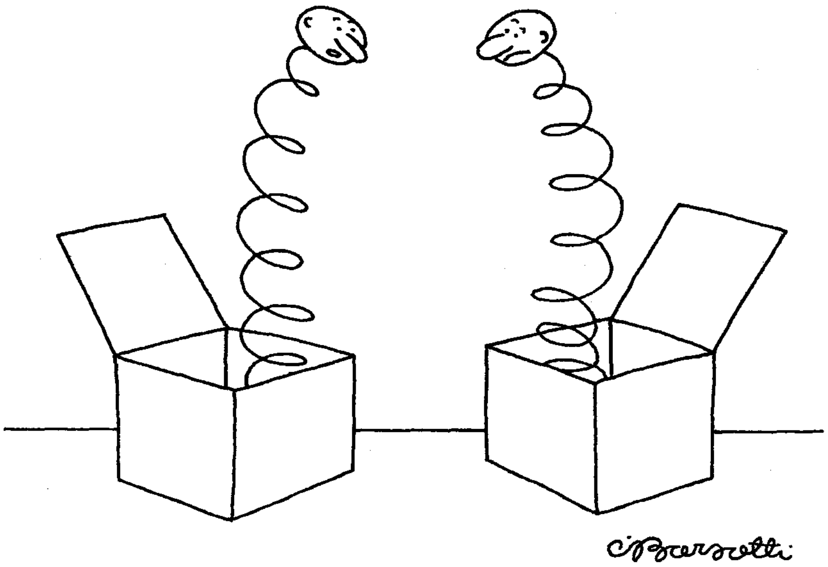
Anyway, what happened was in no way Zalla's fault, but she was tortured by guilt. Days after the incident I'm going to tell about, which I heard of when I visited, Zalla was still upset.

That Monday, my mother had checked into Sibley hospital for a day of tests. In the afternoon, there was a knock on the door and Zalla looked out of the peephole and saw Little Thomas. She'd met him several times through the years, so of course she let him in. He said he was there to return some dishes my mother had let him borrow when he was setting up housekeeping. He also wanted to say goodbye, because he was moving out of the apartment he'd been sharing with other people in Landover, Maryland, and was headed down to the Florida Keys to tend bar. Then he worked the conversation around to asking Zalla for a loan: fifty dollars, which he'd send back as soon as he got to Key West and opened a bank account and deposited some checks. She had thirty-some dollars and gave him everything she had, minus the bus fare she needed to get to Sibley hospital that evening. He asked for a sheet of paper so he could write a goodbye note to my mother, and Zalla found him a notepad. He sat at the kitchen table, writing. It didn't occur to her to stand over him. She unpacked the dishes and loaded them into the dishwasher, and then tidied up in the TV room. He wrote and wrote. He was writing my mother a nasty note, telling her that through therapy he had come to realize that the family perpetuated harmful myths, and that no one had ever chosen to "come clean" about his father's death, because his father had actually died of pneumonia, not from the fall off a wagon. He told her how horrifying it had been to see his father slipping away in the hospital, and he blamed her and Etta Sue for always discussing Cousin Pete's last moments when they talked about his father's death. "Fact is, lightning impressed you more than simple pneumonia," he wrote. He also thought they should have talked more to him about his father's accomplishments. He thought they should have told about his father's love for him. He made no mention of his sister Lilly, from whom he was estranged. He folded the note and put it under the saltshaker, and then he mixed himself a cup of instant cocoa and left, taking the mug he was drinking from.

Zalla was nervous. She thought he might have been drinking, though his breath didn't smell of alcohol. He'd gone to the bathroom while he was there, so Zalla went into the bathroom to make sure everything was all right. It was, but she still had an uneasy feeling. It wasn't until that evening, when she left for the hospital to escort my mother home, that she saw the black felt-pen graffiti on the wall in the downstairs hallway: stick people with corkscrew hair like Martians' antennae, and a quickly scrawled "SCREW YOU BLOWING THIS JOINT." She was horrified, and at first she thought she'd keep quiet about Little Thomas's visit—just pretend it was all a mystery—but she knew that was wrong and she'd have to make a full disclosure.

By the time I heard the story, Zalla and my mother had agreed he was probably drunk—or, worse, on drugs—and that he was a coward to pretend to confront my mother, when all he did was write a note. He also hadn't had the nerve to face his own mother, who was still living on Twentieth Street, and tell her that he was moving away. Zalla kept quiet about the thirty dollars, but the next morning she confessed that, too. In with the dishes he'd brought back were several strange, gold-bordered plates my mother had not given him; neither she nor Zalla knew exactly what to make of that. Both feared, irrationally, that someone would now come for the plates. They seemed to understand, though, that Little Thomas was gone and wouldn't be heard from for some time, if ever. Zalla remained afraid of him, in the abstract. She said he'd crept around like a burglar. That gave my mother and me a good laugh, because he'd been sneaky all his life. Good that he spared Mother's bathroom wall, I joked: bad enough that they'd had to call the management to apologize and to arrange to have the hallway repainted.

While Zalla watched "Goldfinger," my mother led me into her bedroom and told me one of the Dark Secrets she'd never before revealed. It turned out she had always feared Little Thomas would do something really awful, because he had done something very bad as a child. My mother had been furious, but she had never told on him, because she was

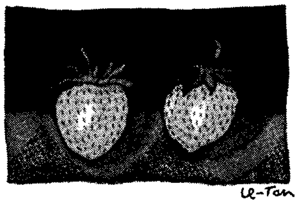


"What a lousy creation myth!"

embarrassed at her own fury, and also because she felt that Little Thomas's demons tortured him enough.

She asked whether I remembered the silhouettes. I did remember them, vaguely, though I had to be reminded that they'd once hung on a satin ribbon in Etta Sue's living room. I remembered them from later on, when they'd hung below the light above the bed in my mother's bedroom, attached to the same ribbon. There had also been one of Lilly, as a baby, and another of Punkin Puppy, in separate frames. The three framed silhouettes on the ribbon had been of Thomas, Sr., Etta Sue, and the man who, Etta Sue told my mother, had cut the silhouettes. Etta Sue explained this somewhat humorous fact by saying that the silhouette cutter was going to throw his self-portrait away—he probably did them the way secretaries practice their typing, or something—and that she had rescued it from the trash. Little Thomas had destroyed *his* silhouette before it got into the frame, and though Etta Sue always meant to have another one cut, Little Thomas wouldn't sit still a second time. My mother shook her head. She said that she supposed the silhouette cutter's self-portrait was sort of like Alfred Hitchcock's including himself in his own films, though that wasn't a good comparison, because Etta Sue had hung it up, not the man himself.

When Etta Sue was forced to move out of her house and into the Twentieth Street apartment after Thomas, Sr.,'s death, she had to discard many things. The furniture my mother could understand, but parting with so many personal possessions had seemed to her a mistake. When the ribbon with the framed silhouettes went into the trash, my mother grabbed it out and said she would keep it for Etta Sue until she felt better. And Etta Sue had given her the strangest look. First shocked, then sad, my mother thought. And in all the years my mother had the silhouettes hung in her bedroom, Etta Sue never mentioned them, although she did eventually ask for Thomas, Sr.,'s shaving mug back, and for the framed picture of herself and her husband taken at a Chinese restaurant on their first anniversary.



But the point of the story, my mother said, was this: One weekend a few months after Thomas, Sr.,'s death, she was taking care of Little Thomas and Lilly, and Little Thomas had gone into the bedroom while all the rest of us were in the back yard and he had taken the silhouettes out of the frames and cut the noses off. Then he slipped them all back into their frames and rehung them. It was days before my mother noticed—everyone with his or her nose chopped off, plus Punkin Puppy, earless.

She hurried right over to Little Thomas's school and waited for him to get out. He walked home, but that day he didn't go anywhere before she confronted him. By her own account, she grabbed the tip of his nose and squeezed it, asking him how he thought he'd like being without his nose. Then she grabbed his ears and asked him if he thought he might like to spend the rest of his life not hearing, too. She crouched and made him look her in the eye and tell her why he'd done it. It was amazing that someone didn't notice her making such a scene and come over, she said. Little Thomas gasped when she pulled him around and shook him by his shoulders, but he never cried.

He had done it, he told her, because the faces in the frames were miniature black ghosts, there to haunt people. He disfigured them because they were ghost monsters with special powers of sneaking inside people. If he got rid of the black ghosts, cut them up a little, they would become white ghosts, with no special power.

My mother was so horrified she couldn't stand. He had given a quite specific, terribly upsetting answer, and she had no idea what response to make, because if he really thought those things he was mad. That would make it the first incidence of real madness in the family. She was ninety-per-cent sure he was telling her what he really believed, but she also thought there was some small chance he might be having her on. She stayed there quite a while, weak in the knees, staring into his face, looking for more information.

"You think I'd care if I didn't have a nose?" he said. "*I* wouldn't care if I didn't have a nose or a mouth or eyes. I wish the sperm had never gone into the egg. I wouldn't mind if there was no me, and you wouldn't, either."

My mother remembered being surprised that he knew about sex—that he knew such words as "sperm" and "egg." She didn't remember what she said to him next, but it had something to do with how she understood that he was very upset that his father was dead and had disappeared, but that he mustn't confuse that with thinking.

Little Thomas broke away from her. "You stupid fool," he said. She remembered that distinctly: "You stupid fool."

After Little Thomas's father's death, my mother now suddenly reminded me, someone courted Etta Sue for a bit, but eventually faded away. In retrospect, my mother said, she thought it might quite possibly have been ("Now, don't laugh," she said) the milkman. Because, come to think of it, why else—unless she was a little embarrassed—would Etta Sue refuse to let anyone in the family know whom she was seeing? Also, Nat the Milkman had been a Sunday painter, so perhaps he had also cut silhouettes.

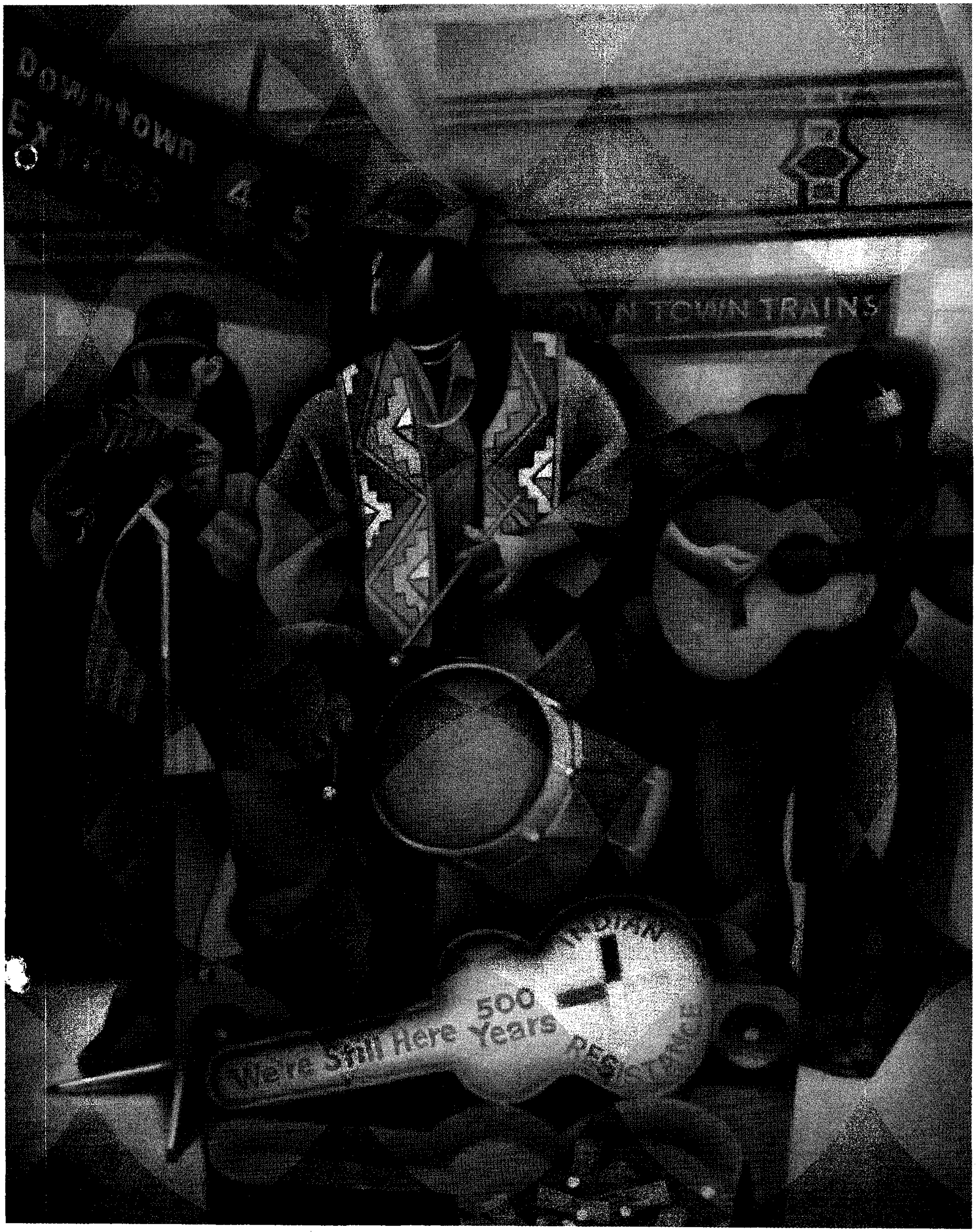
"Say nothing of this to Zalla," my mother said. It was something she had begun to say increasingly, as an afterthought, in recent years—or perhaps as an end to each of her stories, not as an afterthought, really.

I kissed her cheek and gave her hand a squeeze, turning off her bedside lamp with my free hand. It was early evening and dark. We were in autumn, the season when Thomas, Sr., had slipped from high atop the mounded hay—slipped in slow motion, compared to the way his Cousin Pete had been struck by lightning.

That was the past. I imagined the future: the graffiti figures that had already disappeared in the downstairs hallway, whited out by a paint roller. Then I thought about the hospital in Belize, to which for all intents and purposes that paint roller could travel like a comet, [illegible] whiten the drywall that had at long last been installed in the corridors of the new hospital. Zalla would be standing there, her starched white nurse's uniform contrasting with her dark skin, and in a blink my mother would be dead, quite unexpectedly—gone from her white-sheeted bed to the darkness, as Zalla paused in her busy day to remember us, a nice American family. ♦

ARTIST AT LARGE

SOUNDS OF THE SUBWAY *by Gary Kelley*


Downtown
Express
4
5
DOWNTOWN TRAINS
INDIAN
We're Still Here
500 Years
RESISTANCE

THE CRITICS

THE THEATRE

CAPRICE OF THE GODS

by John Lahr

The New York theatre season began in big bowwow fashion on the first weekend of October. By 2:30 P.M., an hour before showtime, on a cloudless Saturday, a line the length of a city block had formed outside the 14th Regiment Armory, in Brooklyn, where Ariane Mnouchkine's Théâtre du Soleil and its two-day, ten-hour cycle of Greek tragedy, "Les Atrides"—combining Aeschylus' "The Oresteia" with Euripides' "Iphigenia in Aulis"—was being produced by the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Beleaguered by the collapse of the economy, the collapse of their city, the collapse of Woody and Mia's romance, New Yorkers seemed happy to turn their attention to the collapse of the House of Atreus. The city's highfliers, to most of whom "Attic" probably means "storage space," rubbed shoulders with the hoi polloi. Occasionally, a hopeful theatregoer panhandled the line, plaintively asking, "Tickets? Tickets?" An official, wearying of the trek around the block, said, "We'll be opening the doors soon. Pass it back." The words echoed down the line like the news of Agamemnon's return to Argos.

Once inside, the ticket holders were herded past the sixty-foot playing area—a kind of squared bullring, with scuffed blond walls bearing rust-colored smears that discreetly hinted at dried blood. Only as they jostled to park their backsides on folding chairs that had been crammed onto behemoth gymnasium risers towering above the stage did the paying customers twig to the fact that Mnouchkine's bold attempt to reimagine the marathon experience of Greek tragedy included the ass-aching discomfort of sitting through it.

For over a quarter of a century, working out of an old ammunition factory on the outskirts of Paris, Mnouchkine and her company have been fashioning their own brand of explosives—a series of elegant and exciting theatrical events, including "1789," "Mephisto," and a samurai-inspired "Richard II." Mnouchkine is a mistress of ceremonies who is interested in the civic dimensions of drama. A conservative avant-gardist, she is one of that rare breed which wants mass communication and actually loves the mass. And in her hands "The Oresteia," which is a hymn to democracy, becomes a democratic spectacle. You can't pay to get the best seat. There are no reserved seats, there are no intermissions, and no one can be seated after the play starts. The audience has to *want* to be there. In order for performance to factor into pleasure, both parts of the theatrical equation—audience and actors—have to be prepared. Here the actors are housed behind the grandstand, in a warren of cubicles under a makeshift pine pagoda lit by flickering kerosene lamps. Their wigs and belts are draped over the rafters, their makeup is meticulously laid out, their ravishing headdresses perch on forms beside the dressing tables. Flowers are placed strategically around the dressing area, whose cushions, carpets, and incense give it the feel of a Turkish bazaar. The actors white their faces, comb the long strands of their wigs, cinch themselves into corsets and long skirts. No telegrams on mirrors, no champagne in the fridge, no clutter of cards or clothes: the atmosphere of "Les Atrides" is one of scrupulous attention to detail. Performer and public are moving inexorably from the ordinary into the extraordinary. This concentrated focus creates an enormous sense of occasion for the actors and the audience alike. So when Jean-Jacques Lemêtre's kettledrums rumble, they announce both onstage and in the grandstand a gorgeous exhibition of energy.

Mnouchkine rightly claims intellectual kinship with, among others, the great Russian avant-garde director V. S. Meyerhold, who, in his attack on naturalism and the teachings of Stanislavski, felt that "words in the theatre are only embellishments on the design of movement." Meyerhold took as his theatrical model the fairground *cabotin*, the seventeenth-century strolling player who combined the clown's poetic agility with an appetite for surprise. While nothing in the punishing violence of the Atreus saga is jokey, the spectacle is imbued with the clown's rebellion against the habitual. Lemêtre's orchestra of four, which takes up a quarter of the stage, employs an exotic array of string and percussive instruments whose weird sonorities brilliantly call up a world preyed upon by gods, ghosts, and murderous vendetta law.

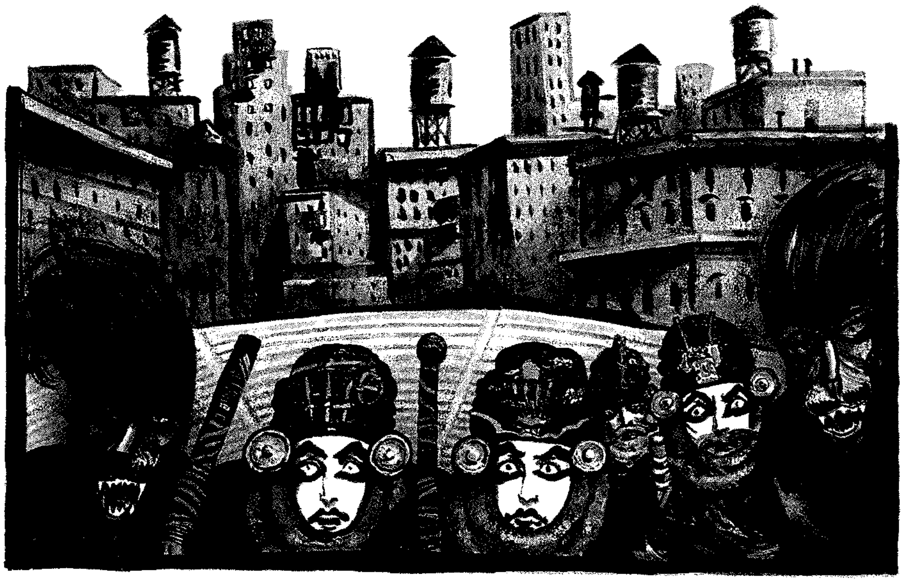
And when the chorus of "Iphigenia in Aulis" makes its first entrance, pushing through the upstage double doors and dancing toward us in the stutter steps of Indian kathakali, Mnouchkine immediately puts the audience in another spiritual realm, where the rhetoric of movement matches the strangeness of the choric odes. At a stroke, Greek tragedy is stripped of its familiar associations, and we are lured into that otherness which is the terrain of myth. Hints of Greek folk dance, Balinese dance, Kabuki *aragato* ("rough stuff and bombast") are also layered into the wild geometry of the plays, which by their very nature are encounters with the marvellous. The production speaks its passions not just to our heads but to our senses. It opens the audience up not only to the poetry of language but to the silent metaphysics of color, gesture, fabrics, and space. The cumulative effect is hypnotic, as if we were walking in our dreams. Mnouchkine's attack mirrors the structural arc of "The Oresteia," which is established in the first image of the first play, when the Watchman in "Agamemnon" waits for a sign of light, and culminates with "The Eumenides," when the Furies are called out of the dark and into the democratic gaze of the citizens.

Where most modern drama is too small for the heroic spaces of large institutional theatres, "The Oresteia" bursts their bounds. The plays address the issue of how to heal wounds we carry for sins we didn't commit, how to evolve justice, how to turn the dark destructive forces in both the self and the state into creative ones. And in "The Eumenides," when Athene, a goddess born from a man's head, casts the deciding vote that allows Orestes to walk free and elude destruction by the Furies for killing his mother ("I favor the male side. . . . I wouldn't give preference to a woman"), we bear witness to the incarnation of patriarchy. By beginning the cycle with "Iphigenia in Aulis," the only extant Greek tragedy that dramatizes Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter to gain victory over Troy, Mnouchkine wants to spell out the family story and sympathetically reinterpret Clytemnestra, turning her from a virago into a rebel whose actions reject women's second-class citizenship in fifth-century Athens. Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon is both an act of revenge and a liberation—a point that Aeschylus implies and that Mnouchkine underlines by tacking Euripides' irony on to the majesty of Aeschylus' democratic optimism. It's like having a first act of "Carousel" written by Stephen Sondheim.

But although "Iphigenia in Aulis" gets "Les Atrides" off to a rousing start, it has the curious effect of helping to sink "Agamemnon," which follows from it and recapitulates the saga of the sacrifice. The audience palpably sags under the weight of now unnecessary exposition. You come away thinking that the play is undramatic, when in fact it is Mnouchkine who has excised the central dramatic image—the crimson carpet—around which the battle between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra is fought and their natures are revealed.

Clytemnestra gives "red-carpet treatment" a whole new meaning. Her revenge is not just to murder her vainglorious husband but to demonstrate her superiority over him. "Don't turn me into a woman with your softness," he says. But that's what she does. The crimson carpet, which begins as a sign of flattery and then becomes a taunt to the gods, ends as an emblem of the Greeks' fear of female engulfment: Clytemnestra uses it as a net to trap Agamemnon while she stabs him. In this production, though, the carpet is discussed but never shown; and so the subtlety of their battle is not dramatized. It is a major omission, and a missed scenic opportunity, by a director who usually loses no opportunity to make thrilling stage pictures. The loss is symptomatic of Mnouchkine's unnecessary special pleading in her attempt to humanize Clytemnestra. To this end, she has cast the powerful and appealing Juliana Carneiro da Cunha, whose doleful eyes and elegant dignity play down the text's repeated allusions to Clytemnestra's mannish nature. And, where Aeschylus introduced a Nurse to undermine Clytemnestra's claims for herself as a mother in the scene before she pleads with her son for her life, Mnouchkine diffuses the power of the Nurse's indictment by staging her as the Hellenic equivalent of a pantomime dame. Elsewhere, Mnouchkine, who claims that "our duty as directors is to be good readers," misreads and simplifies the story with politically correct bowdlerizations. At the conclusion of her version of "The Eumenides," for instance, Athene promises the Furies a place of honor in the city: "In future times Women will be more revered." The lines do not exist in the Greek text. They are Mnouchkine's sop to sisterhood.

Mnouchkine's great achievement here is to crack the theatrical bugbear of the chorus. She largely succeeds in restoring to Greek tragedy a sense of the expressive possibilities of the savage, demonized world of the plays. There is a kind of intoxication in the swirling hubbub of the chorus as it vaults the walls, skirts flying, at the finale of "The Libation Bearers," or circles around the prostrate Clytemnestra in the awful delirium of war at the finale of "Iphigenia in Aulis." The tumult of Mnouchkine's chorus is just the kind of poetic revelation Artaud had in mind when he wrote about theatre that "plunges us into that state of uncertainty and ineffable anguish which is characteristic of poetry." The chorus, however agitated, is always poised in some strategic, kinetic balance that adheres to classic symmetry and to the aesthetics of harmony so central to ancient Greek culture. Nowhere is Mnouchkine's interpretative and



Iphigenia in Brooklyn: the Furies from "Les Atrides."

scenic genius more powerful than in her evocation of the Furies. Terrible cries of birds and growls of dogs well up from below the grandstand and echo in the vast building. And when the Furies arrive they bolt onto the stage on all fours from subterranean lairs behind the bullring walls—a pack of snarling, red-eyed, baboon-faced dogs rooting for Orestes' blood with their pointed snouts. The dogs' high, swept-back quiffs of black hair throw long, eerie shadows on the Armory brick wall. The image is electrifying and exact. Somehow, Mnouchkine occasionally contrives to have the dogs, who remain on all fours throughout the evening, leap high into the air, as if levitating with voracity. The execution is flawless, and the masks, by Erhard Stiefel, are inspired. The dogs are a yapping, frenzied, predatory correlative for all those unseen destructive forces which hunt man down and push him to the point of madness.

Once, when Charlie Chaplin was asked to describe his art, he quipped, "Entrances and exits." The same could be said of Mnouchkine. She provides a raked trolley to whip her characters—in telling friezelike postures—on and off center stage from an entrance built into the middle of the grandstand. It's an effective, if overused, device, which adds both momentum and a mythic dimension to the storytelling. The Prophetess (well performed by Nirupama Nityanandan, who also plays Electra and Iphigenia) is dramatically lifted from the back of the grandstand and deposited center stage by shrouded guards to begin "The Eumenides." And "The Libation Bearers" ends memorably, with Electra unable to push offstage the pallet on which Clytemnestra and Aegisthus lie murdered. The gravity of the murder is made manifest. Only at the play's last moment does the pallet, with the help of the chorus, disappear—sensationally—from sight. Mnouchkine attends to every nanosecond of stage time. Although her scenic powers may outweigh her analytic ones, she puts the production in the service of the text. This inevitably means longueurs for a contemporary audience. But these lapses are more than compensated for by the imagery. When Orestes (the athletic Simon Abkarian, whose heroic features also serve well for the vain Agamemnon and for Achilles) dances exultantly over his dead mother's body, heaving and twisting as if in some spiritual convulsion, the image chills the blood and sears the brain.

In Aristophanes' "The Frogs," Dionysus, at whose festival the tragedies were performed, goes down to Hades to find a poet to save Athens in its moment of danger. Euripides and Aeschylus debate, and in the end, choosing wisdom over cleverness, Dionysus picks Aeschylus. "Off you go," says Pluto, the god of Hades, as Aeschylus heads back to earth. "Go with your sound advice and save the City for us. Educate the fools—you'll find a good many." Theatre was how that education took place. In the arena, ideas were tested, language was minted, and the citizens were called into a community to share and be shaped by the events. No wonder, then, that the word "civilization" has its root in "city," with the cross-fertilization such collectiveness implies. The movement from barbarity to community, from exclusion to acceptance, is caught in one stunning final image by Mnouchkine: the Furies abandon their predatory posture to walk upright off the stage. They have been joined to the civic domain. ♦

UNHOLY GLEE

by Edith Oliver

The holy terror of Simon Gray's satiric comedy "The Holy Terror," at the Promenade, is Mark Melon, a London publisher who recounts and reënacts his own rise and fall in a speech to the Women's Institute in Cheltenham, England. In Mr. Gray's unsparing and funny portrait, Mark (as impeccably acted by Daniel Gerroll) is a fellow with a lecherous eye and an unfailing nose for the main chance—for professional advancement and for the potential best-seller. Right at the start, we see him putting down a member of the firm many years his senior, and then, smooth as silk, shifting a younger colleague around, and making clear to his secretary that extracurricular duties of a personal nature are of primary importance. Mark goes from success to success, and then suddenly everything reverses: he breaks down and, eventually, returns to the office in a minor, advisory capacity. The story is the least of it; the fun is in the episodes and the lines.

"Ill-natured pornography!" Mark announces in triumph when he decides to accept a terrible novel in order to bed the woman who submitted it, but first, of course, publishing being what it is, "Lunch next week." Then off with his clothes and, when the secretary enters, off with hers, as he quickly undresses her. His dismay—and fast recovery—when he learns that one of his writers is toiling away on a play in heroic couplets is a sight to behold. Life in the office spins along, but life at home does not. Mark's adolescent son slouches around the house, neglects his schoolwork, and forfeits any chance for acceptance at a university, and Mark is brutal to him. Then, first thing you know, Mark is writhing, stripped and sobbing, on the floor (even here he turns courteously to address the invisible Cheltenham ladies in his audience) and accusing his patient wife of infidelity. It must be said that this aspect of the story—the breakdown—is not as convincing as what has gone before, and Mark is in danger of being crushed by the burden of the playwright's contempt for him. On the evidence at hand, Mr. Gray is more successful at being funny than at being serious.

The production, under Mr. Gray's direction, is more than satisfactory. The role of Mark could have been written to display Mr. Gerroll's manifold talents; he has never been better, which is saying a lot. Anthony Fusco has the luck to be assigned four young men—an editor and three authors, the funniest of them a Scot with an impenetrable accent who submits a manuscript in a made-up language. Michael McGuire is the senior member of the firm, demoted by Mark; Lily Knight is sexy and sharp as the secretary; Kristine Nielsen has a turn all her own as the rotten pornographer; beautiful Kristin Griffith plays the difficult role of the bewildered wife with quiet strength; and Nöel Derecki does what can be done with the underwritten part of the sullen, stubborn, and badly hurt son. The scenery, by David Jenkins ("minimal" is the word, and minimal is exactly right for the purpose), consists for the most part of two swivel chairs, one at each end of the gray-carpeted stage, which whirl the characters on and off. The effective lighting was designed by Beverly Emmons, and the costumes are by David Murin. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

MEN OVERBOARD

by Terrence Rafferty

A FEW minutes into Quentin Tarantino's pulp crime movie "Reservoir Dogs," we see a crook trying to calm down his gut-shot, whimpering partner with a gentle reminder of how wounded thugs are supposed to behave: "Come on, who's a tough guy?" These words—spoken in the tone of a doctor saying "Be a big boy, now" to a child frightened of a needle—hang over the movie's remaining ninety minutes of stylized mayhem and playground machismo. Most of the action takes place in a cavernous warehouse, to which the surviving participants of a botched jewelry heist have repaired to lick their wounds while they wait for instructions from their boss. Killing time during a lull in this extremely bad day at the office, the men amuse themselves by accusing each other of treachery (*someone* tipped off the police), waving their guns, screaming obscenities, and torturing a cop whom one of them has captured. These scenes have a spare, hermetic, deliberately stagy quality that suggests a theatre-of-cruelty exercise, and Tarantino's compositions, which rely heavily on long shots and low angles, emphasize the characters' absurdity. This is, explicitly, a man's world; there isn't a woman with a speaking part in the movie. Who's a tough guy? In "Reservoir Dogs," everyone is—or believes he is, or pretends he is—and the characters' essential uniformity is meant to be funny. For the caper, they're all dressed alike, in dark suits, white shirts, and skinny sixties-style ties, and they address each other only with the ludicrous pseudonyms that their boss has assigned them: Mr. White, Mr. Orange, Mr. Pink, Mr. Blonde, Mr. Blue, and Mr. Brown. Tarantino, abstracting wildly, wants us to feel as if we had crash-landed in an alternate universe: the Planet of the Goons.

At its best, the film—Tarantino's first—plays like a deadpan parody of such heist-movie touchstones as "The Asphalt Jungle" and "The Killing." Buckets of blood are spilled in "Reservoir Dogs," and even when nothing violent is happening onscreen we're steeling ourselves for the next bout of gore. Yet the grisliness isn't truly disturbing. What we see, as we peek through our fingers, is always too distanced, too unreal to affect us emotionally. The tone is light, smart-alecky, antic. Tarantino lets us know that he's just doing a routine: snappy patter, a song or two, and, to send us home smiling, a little soft-shoe dance on the grave of the male action movie. The viciousness of the characters is impossible to take seriously, because the movie presents them all as demented children, little boys with big guns. Mr. Orange (Tim Roth), a comic-book aficionado, pumps himself up for a dangerous moment by turning to his image in the mirror and saying, "Don't pussy out on me now. . . . You're not gonna get hurt. . . . You're supercool." Mr. Blonde (Michael Madsen), a stone-crazy killer, at one point deflates a threatening tirade, directed at him by Mr. White (Harvey Keitel), with a sort of capsule review: "Wow, that was really exciting. I'll bet you're a big Lee Marvin fan." The movie's gonzo humor reaches a peak of weird inspiration in the final

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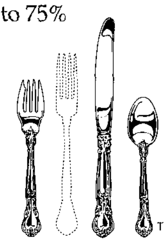

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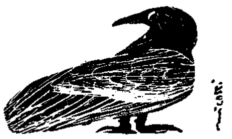
minutes: several of the thieves, after a heated round of taunts and dares, fire on one another at precisely the same instant and crumple to the ground in unison, giving a simultaneous climax to all the juvenile-delinquent bravado that's been building throughout the picture.

The big shoot-out is a pretty good joke, and a satisfying release from the testosterone nightmare of the preceding hour and a half. It does not, however, make this a good movie: "Reservoir Dogs" is less than the sum of its outrageous gags and inventive bits of business. The story is impressively bloody, but the blood is thin, and it keeps leaking out; Tarantino has all he can do to maintain the movie's pulse. Mostly, he tries to get by on film-school cleverness—a homemade pharmaceutical cocktail of allusions, pop music, and visual jolts. Sometimes you can almost hear him shout encouragement to himself: "Who's the new Scorsese? Who's the new Peckinpah?" The movie's long pre-credit scene is a set piece of the gang's pre-robbery coffee-shop breakfast, in which the sinuously mobile camera, the inanely combative you-can't-call-me-a-mook style of dialogue, and the presence of Keitel evoke the charged atmosphere of "Mean Streets." The credit sequence brings us into Peckinpah territory: the men walk close together toward their destiny, and the last shot of this montage, taken from behind the implacable-looking group, is a quotation from "The Wild Bunch." (The title itself is probably a nod to "Straw Dogs.") Having established the frame of reference, Tarantino shock-cuts to the wounded tough guy, and gets down to the job of telling the story. The problem is, there isn't much of a story to tell. The caper (the plotting of which we see in several long flashbacks) isn't especially complex, and the relationships among the characters aren't, either. The dramatic possibilities of infantile bullies goading each other to violence are sadly limited.



The distance between Tarantino's filmmaking models and his own practice is clear in the picture's very last shot, which borrows an idea from the elegiac conclusion of Peckinpah's "Ride the High Country" and turns it (for those who recognize it) into a fast, brutal gag. The reversal is a punk gesture, and its audacity is sort of winning: at least, Tarantino isn't overly reverent of his masters. But the shot also reminds us of what "Reservoir Dogs" lacks: the emotional weight and the sense of urgency that gave Peckinpah's films—and Scorsese's seventies films—their exploding-bullet power. Tarantino's movie, for all its blood and guts and fury, just grazes the audience's consciousness. It's a reasonably lively picture about nothing, and that's apparently all it was ever meant to be. Tarantino's low-aspiration approach to moviemaking may be a generational hazard; he seems to treat everything with an impatient, born-too-late shrug. As supercool young directors go, he's fairly engaging: his nihilism is playful and oddly cheery. The danger for him, I think, is that he'll go the way of Joel and Ethan Coen, whose début, "Blood Simple" (1984), was, like "Reservoir Dogs," a twisted, sardonic doodle on B-movie themes. Since then, their ingenuity has become self-regarding and nastily superior. Like all clever people, Tarantino will have to guard against falling in love with his own facility. He's a director to watch, but, given the current state of American movie culture, it would be wise to watch through your fingers.

"NIGHT AND THE CITY" is a bigger-budgeted attempt to tap the Scorsese vein of kinetic urban violence, out-of-control male energy, and brooding, pessimistic wit. It's a vehicle for Keitel's "Mean Streets" co-star, Robert De Niro; the director, Irwin Winkler, co-produced "Raging Bull" and "GoodFellas"; and the script is by Richard Price, who wrote "The Color of Money" and the Scorsese segment of "New York Stories." The pedigree of "Night and the City" is formidable; what's actually on the screen, though, is wan, washed-out, blurry—a photocopy of a fax of a carbon of something that was once clear and bold. Winkler moves the camera constantly, fills the soundtrack with old rock and roll and R. & B., and tries hard to create a gritty atmosphere of low-life New York desperation, but everything he does looks

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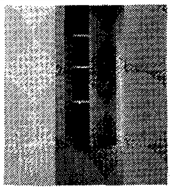

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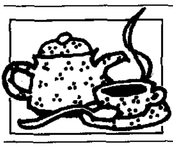

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mechanical, as if it had been learned by rote.

In a sense, the picture's *n*th-generation quality is built into the material. "Night and the City" is a remake of Jules Dassin's terrific 1950 film noir of that name. The hero of the original, a nightclub tout named Harry Fabian (brilliantly played by Richard Widmark), teams up with an aging wrestler to put on an exhibition of Greco-Roman wrestling, and runs afoul of a powerful promoter who's making a killing on the debased, clownish version of the sport. In the new movie, Fabian (De Niro) is a weaselly, ambulance-chasing lawyer whose dream is to bring back the excitement of the glory days of boxing; he, too, is stymied—forcibly—by an unscrupulous big-shot competitor (Alan King). Winkler and Price make only the most glancing attempt to re-create the tone of Dassin's film: they turn the story into comedy. It's as if they had taken to heart the fatalism of the original material—had realized that the vitality of the film noir is as irretrievably lost as that of Greco-Roman wrestling. All you can do, this movie seems to say, is accept the inevitability of decline and make some jokes. That approach isn't so different from Quentin Tarantino's, but the cheap, grungy look of "Reservoir Dogs" is in keeping with its youthful slash-and-burn nihilism; the cynicism of "Night and the City" is undercut by a high-powered cast (which also includes Jessica Lange, Cliff Gorman, Jack Warden, and Eli Wallach) and top-of-the-line production values.

The movie can't cover up its essential emptiness. Price's deft riffing and Winkler's not so deft camera acrobatics serve only to decorate a story that no longer seems to have any point, and De Niro creates a perfect vacuum at the center of the picture. Movies like this keep reminding us, explicitly and implicitly, that things aren't what they used to be, and De Niro is the living proof: he's like a hologram of himself, recognizable but eerily insubstantial. In this movie's version of Fabian, the character is clearly meant to be a lovable hustler, a loser who charms us with his indefatigable optimism; and he is, of course, supposed to be funny. De Niro jumps around, bounces on the balls of his feet, spits out long motor-mouth soliloquies, and mugs frenetically, but he isn't charming,

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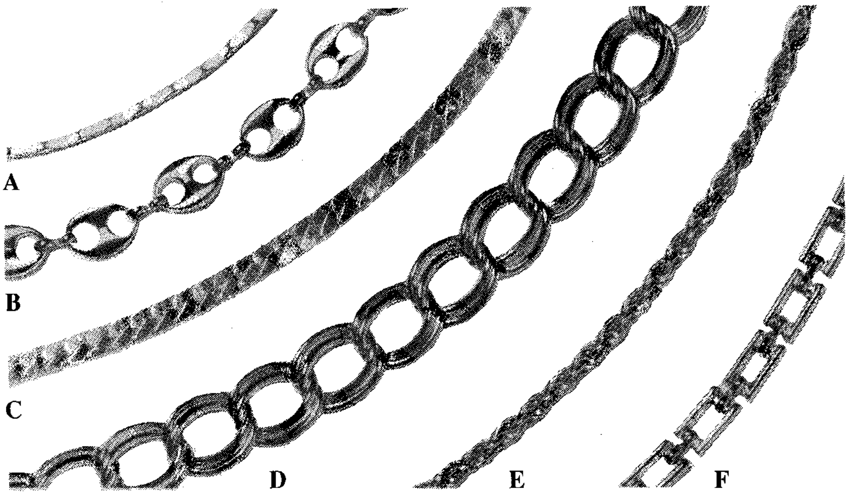

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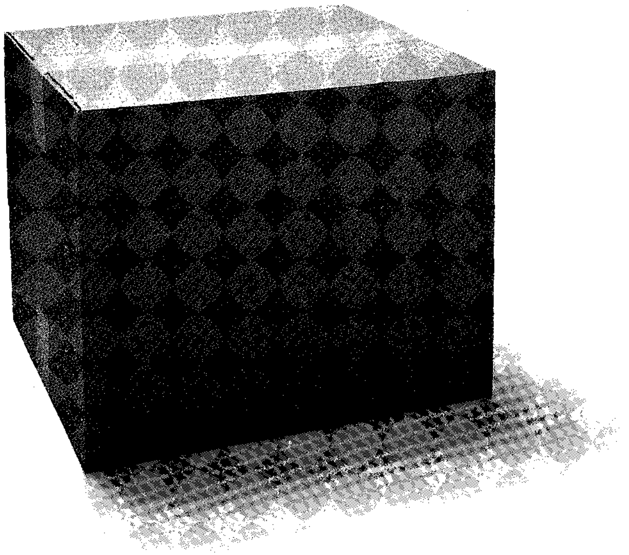

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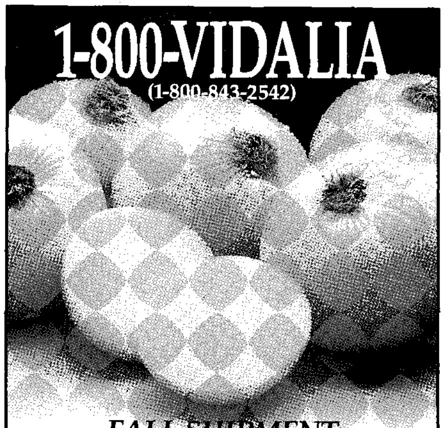

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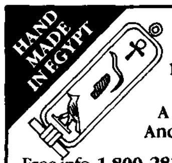

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and he's about as funny as Rupert Pupkin, the deranged and desperately untalented would-be comic he played in "The King of Comedy." The movie tries to make a virtue of its own secondhandness—to play its middle-aged exhaustion and sense of resignation for laughs. What it achieves is merely parody. Events, a great philosopher once wrote, repeat themselves—the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. "Night and the City" demonstrates that eventually, after enough repetition, everything will present itself as a tenth-rate Catskills standup routine performed by a guy in a terrible rug.

ROBERT REDFORD'S back-to-the-source impulses are of the pastoral variety: he's looking to recapture serenity, not excitement. "A River Runs Through It," the movie he has directed from Norman Maclean's classic story about fly-fishing and family loyalty in Montana, is nothing if not serene. It's lulling, tranquil—no, it's dead dull. Maclean's lyrical novella is leisurely but absorbing. The narrator relates the history of his relationship with his kid brother, Paul, through detailed descriptions of their fishing trips. The angling lore never gets tedious, because the story is driven by the tension between what it's telling us—the fantastically precise descriptions of Paul's prowess as a fisherman—and what it's leaving out. The narrator senses that in every other area his brother's life is messy, complicated, perhaps dangerous, but he doesn't know much more than that and has no idea how to help. The obsessiveness of his analysis of Paul's fishing technique is fuelled by his frustration at not understanding his brother better. Paul is mysteriously gifted at catching fish and mysteriously inept at living; the narrator tries, and fails, to connect the two mysteries, to explain what he can't see in terms of what he can.

Disastrously, the movie opens up the narrative. Redford and the screenwriter, Richard Friedenberg, show us too much of what's happening offstage—that is, away from the river—and thus allow the real source of the story's emotions to dissipate. With a delicately balanced narrative like this one, more is inevitably less. And the extra scenes cooked up by Friedenberg and Redford are banal by any standard. The movie has a beautiful

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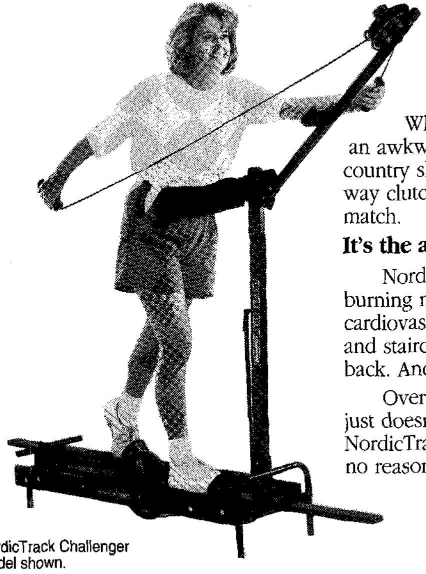
surface—it's ravishingly shot, by Philippe Rousselot—but it's lifeless, because the vital spirit that animates Maclean's work is missing. His writing is informed by the precision and grace that he seems to have learned, at least in part, from fly-fishing. Redford and Friedenberg have a different approach: this picture tries to catch the elusive meanings of "A River Runs Through It" by lobbing grenades into the river and blowing everything in it out into the light of day. ♦

PHOTO OPPORTUNISTS

by Michael Sragow

"THE PUBLIC EYE," inspired by the life and work of the tabloid-news photographer Weegee, is gorgeous and disappointing. It's an oddball reverie that gets rolling early, then stops cold. The writer-director, Howard Franklin, takes off from a fascinating subject: the intrepid snapshooter whose commercial scrambling and manipulations brought him closer to the pulse of New York in the thirties and forties than more refined and scrupulous artists. Franklin adorns his hero, Leon Bernstein (a.k.a. the Great Bernzini), with the trademarks of Weegee the Famous: the omnipresent cigar and Speed Graphic camera, the police radio in the front of his car and the developing lab in the trunk, the pride in beating other shutterbugs to crime scenes and grabbing the most dramatic pictures. Joe Pesci plays Bernzy with acute street reflexes and surprising sensitivity. This portrait of a man who funnels his feelings into his photographs is both a tribute to seasoned professionalism and a prime example of it. Pesci makes you believe that this tough little guy wouldn't fold before the Feds or the Mob. Franklin cannily exploits his star's instant rapport with the audience. When Bernzy rearranges a corpse—restoring a dead man's hat because his readers get a kick out of seeing murder victims with their lids on—viewers laugh with shock at Pesci's casual, cynical expression of Bernzy's callous folk wisdom.

Nothing startles Bernzy, the unwavering observer who knows the city from the sewers up. And no one escapes his



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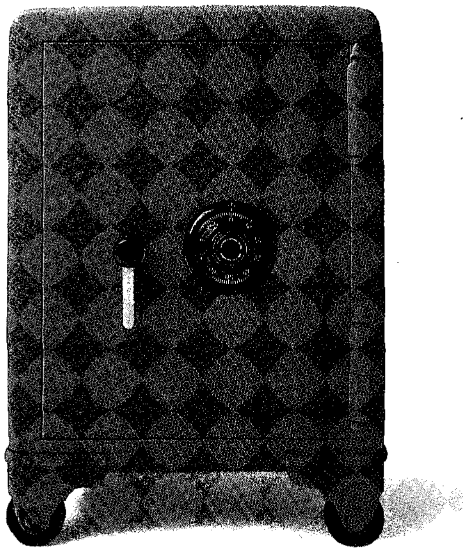

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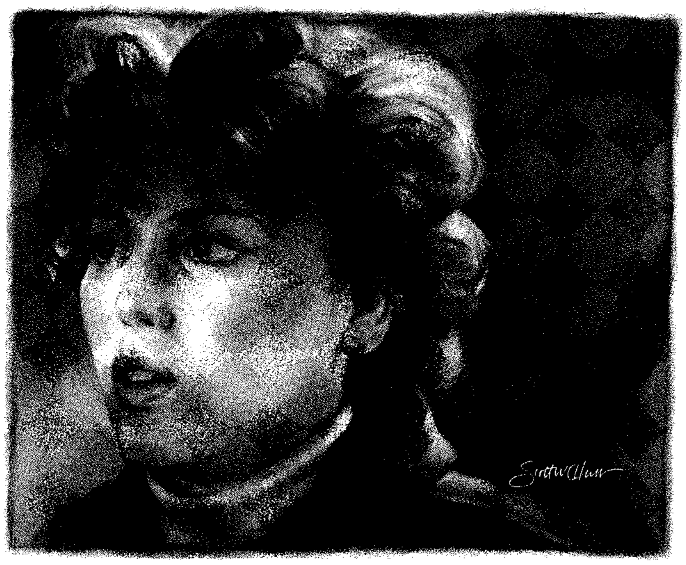
democratic glance. When Kay Levitz (Barbara Hershey), the widow of a fancy-night-club owner, hires Bernzy to find out why a mystery man is pressuring her to accept him as her partner, the audience wants to watch the cameraman's hardscrabble vision of life put to use in detective work. But the suspense plot Franklin comes up with, which involves battling crime families and wartime racketeering, bogs down in details. You keep waiting for revelations of Bernzy's character. Franklin transforms the photographer into a romantic archetype—the lonely guy as tragic hero—but this doesn't suit the action. Watching Bernzy play the angles would be more enjoyable if Franklin weren't ladling on the pathos. It's a treat to see Hershey looking glamorous, and she knows how to communicate sympathy without getting sloppy. But Kay and Bernzy's love match derives from maudlin biopics like "Moulin Rouge." (He's vulnerable to her because she perceives him as an artist.) Rather than dramatize the character's contradictions, the script tells us straight out exactly what we're supposed to glean about Bernzy—that he's an immigrant who views Gotham through a lens because he can't fit in, and a loner who gives no serious thought to romance because he's sure he'll be thwarted.

The excitement of the historical Weegee, as a craftsman and a personality, came from his barely contained chaos—his blend of humanist and showman, smart guy and clown, poet and voyeur, urban chronicler and exaggerator. "The Public Eye" is deflating, because its depiction of Bernzy is ultimately soft-edged and nostalgic. Franklin supplies him with aesthetic justifications even when his morals are questionable. It's a credit to Franklin's directing that Pesci appears primed to go all the way with the role, but it's largely because of Franklin's screenplay that he doesn't get there. Just about all the actors make good impressions, but only Stanley Tucci, as a low-level mobster, and Jerry Adler, as a self-loathing columnist turned playwright, tap any subterranean emotions. What sustains the movie is Franklin's loving, complex evocation of wartime New York. His cinematographer, Peter Suschitzky ("The Empire Strikes Back," "Where the Heart Is"), is a contemporary master, and here he works in perfect concert with the production designer, Marcia Hinds-Johnson; the costume designer, Jane Robinson; and the stills photographer, Ben Glass. They achieve a sumptuous dark-toned look that unites the colors of Bernzy's nocturnal haunts with the stark melodrama of his black-and-white photographs. The best part of "The Public Eye" is that the real world and the photo world bleed into each other, sometimes literally.



Flirting with danger: Virginia Madsen

WITH infrared stock, Weegee used to snap pictures of filmgoers as they reacted to the screen. If he were around today, he'd haunt the movie houses in African-American neighborhoods. Ever since Richard Pryor riffed on "The Exorcist," the immediate and audible responses of urban blacks to movies in general and scare films in particular have been subjects for black comedians. In Pryor's trailblazing routine, he said that if black folks starred in "The Exorcist" there'd be no movie, because as soon as the Devil growled hello they'd say goodbye. By the time Eddie Murphy got around to sending up black moviegoing, he made viewer participation the point—he said that if one audience member went "Sh-h-h," another would ask, "Is something wrong with your lips?" I can't think of a film better calculated to cash in on black skepticism and black audience participation than "Candyman," directed and written by Bernard Rose from a Clive Barker short story ("The Forbidden") about a bogeyman who materializes in front of disbelievers and carves them up with a hook. As in the story, an intrepid female graduate student ventures into the inner city, camera in hand, and falls prey to the Candyman. He tries to seduce her, Dracula-like, with images of the immortality she'll win as his victim. (The reason he's called the Candyman is that his body serves as a beehive.) But in Barker's story, set in Liverpool, the Candyman's skin is described as "the color of buttermilk" and "waxy yellow"; in the movie, that mischievous-eyed blonde Virginia Madsen saunters into a rough black Chicago housing project and confronts a black Candyman (Tony Todd), who's the spectre of a freed slave's son. Every time Madsen underestimates the tenants' fears or disregards their warnings, she's like the white dupes Pryor mocked in his "Exorcist" routine—except that this time the grim joke is part of the movie. (Madsen gives a juicy B-picture performance, throwing herself into each absurd display of hubris.) The distributors haven't emphasized this aspect in their promotions, and the moviemakers cover themselves against charges of class or racial stereotyping by giving Madsen a black thesis partner (Kasi Lemmons) and by starting the action with sheltered college kids rattling off their own Candyman fantasies. But the racial brinkmanship is the film's most original and effective gimmick. The underlying notion—that privileged whites can't handle urban-black reality—serrates the satiric scenes of academics flirting and competing. Still, for all its slick savvy, "Candyman" is just a gory campfire tale. To generate any genuine fun, the movie needs to be seen in a city, at midnight. It counts on the audience for completion.

OF course, I prefer movies that exploit an audience to those that make an audience feel downright superfluous—especially when they're as high-handed as "1492: Conquest of Paradise," Ridley Scott's dead-in-the-water attempt to update and preserve the Columbus myth in the person of Gérard Depardieu. Scott, a virtuoso of the ersatz, overrelies on his composer, Vangelis, who whips up aural hurricanes with blaring Dark Age choral music that merges with screaming humans and shrieking birds and howling winds. Scott doesn't stint on the torture and carnage. But there's no illusion of life in the medieval Spanish scenes, with their Old Master lighting, or in the primitive American scenes, with their atmospheric fog and smoke effects. The movie remains one huge objet d'non-art.

The screenwriter and co-producer, Roselyne Bosch, was formerly a reporter, and this script—her first—operates like checklist journalism, steering a middle course between the untarnished hero of nineteenth-century portraits of Columbus and the genocidal bungler of twentieth-century revisionism. After the grandiloquent opening titles, which set up Columbus as "one man" opposed to the tides of fear and reaction sweeping through Inquisition Spain, the moviemakers struggle feebly to humanize him. Yes, they seem to be saying, he was personally ambitious and tempestuous, but he was also a bold and forward-thinking visionary. Scott and company don't accentuate the point that Columbus thought he was in Asia; they're too intent on painting him as a champion of all things new—especially the New World.

A director like Terry Gilliam might have conveyed the audacity of the mariner's feat by dotting the movie with images of sea monsters and land marvels which pre-Columbian Europeans carried in their heads. Barring that kind of lunatic invention, some Old Hollywood polish would have come as a relief. With Sigourney Weaver (as Isabella), Armand Assante, Angela Molina, Fernando Rey, Michael Wincott, Tcheky Karyo, and Steven Waddington heading the supporting cast, "1492" combines American, British, Spanish, and French actors without adjusting for their jarring styles and accents. Depardieu has little authority in English. When he rallies his sailors, you'd understand if they jumped overboard. ♦

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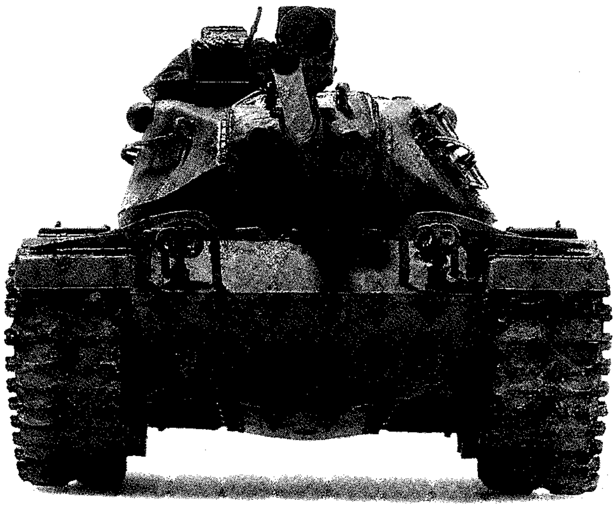

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MUSICAL EVENTS

UNFINISHED SYMPHONIES

by Paul Griffiths

If the Philharmonic is to enjoy a "Masur era" during the coming years, the best we can hope for is a solid competence in the Central European classics: that's where Mr. Masur's experience lies, and presumably that's why he was appointed. But there is still some way to go, and it's unfortunate that, because the orchestra is celebrating its sesquicentenary in this second season of his directorship, he finds himself catapulted into a jamboree when he might want to take a steadier line. Somebody had the strange idea of marking the anniversary by commissioning a whole lot of "fanfares": time-consuming things to write and to rehearse, and destined for instant disappearance. The first of these was Tobias Picker's "Bang!," which featured an odd little music-box strain from a lone celesta interrupting three and a half minutes of orchestral pyrotechnics (a geological era on the time scale of fireworks, those three and a half minutes). But otherwise, and apart from a start-off gala of Kathleen Battle and "West Side Story," Mr. Masur's opening programs were solidly grounded in Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Bruckner.

There was opportunity here to observe his strengths—chiefly his energy and his self-effacing dedication—but also his and the orchestra's problems. No doubt some of those problems are the fault of Avery Fisher Hall. Despite the risers on the platform, the woodwinds still sound as if they were playing from behind a soft wall, and the massed violin tone is still harsh. Yet if there's something desperate in the orchestra's style the reason is more in its rhythm than in the quality of its sound. Mr. Masur is an emphatic downbeater; he has his players train their sights on the end of the next phrase, so that, as if chased through a maze, they hurry from corner to corner, without conveying much sense of the longer journey. What also contributes to the hectic effect is the low priority Mr. Masur places on exactness of ensemble. To cite the most obvious example, he stabs out the first-movement motto of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony so that its final note is rough-edged, a rushed gathering of instrumental voices. This certainly heightens the dynamism, as an arrow at its mark will suggest stopped flight more convincingly if it's vibrating rather than stationary. But so many fuzzy edges in these opening performances went beyond that impression of impact to sound merely lacking in focus and care.

The Beethoven symphony was there at the start of this jubilee season because it was the very first work the orchestra had played. Alongside it Mr. Masur placed another symphony of the same period, but one never before heard at the Philharmonic: Étienne-Nicolas Méhul's First, in G minor—the point being, as Schumann was the first to observe, that the Méhul finale has a four-note tag similar to that of the Beethoven's first movement. However, it's possible to make too much of this. Méhul, writing his symphony the same year, if not earlier, probably hadn't seen the Beethoven; Beethoven's only recorded references to Méhul are from a much later period, and indicate a distinctly milder approbation than he accorded Cherubini. Then, there's the internal evidence—the fact that Méhul places a lighter touch on the three-note repetition and uses the idea to spin his movement onward, instead of expounding it as a thematic shape in itself. Still, the conjunction was an interesting one, in revealing so powerfully how Beethoven towered over his contemporaries. Quite apart from finding implications in the shared idea which escaped Méhul entirely, Beethoven's symphony, even in this driven performance, revealed a harmonic awareness so much deeper that Méhul's seemed like an ink sketch beside a monument.

Mr. Masur's concerts last month also included two unfinished monuments, Schubert's Eighth Symphony and Bruckner's Ninth—the former graced with some beautiful wind blending, the latter (at least at the open rehearsal I was able to attend) with moments of splendor from horns and trombones, and some magical suspensions of huge sound between paragraphs. Curiously, both the city's opera houses, too, were engaging with the incomplete. The Met season opened with "The Tales of Hoffmann," in a slightly new production that used a longer text than hitherto. Meanwhile, City Opera was offering the first New York staging of Busoni's "Doktor Faust," which belongs with that extraordinary collection of unfinished, unfinishable operas—"Turandot," "Moses und Aron," and "Lulu" are others—from the two decades between the world wars.

As with "Turandot"—or, indeed, "The Tales of Hoffmann"—companies producing "Doktor Faust" have several choices about how to proceed. There's the version that Antony Beaumont, the leading figure in Busoni studies, put together in the eighties for performances in Europe; there's the alternative he suggests, of placing the Sarabande at the end of the third act. City Opera, however, decided to go back to the completion made by one of Busoni's associates, Philipp Jarnach, for the first production, at Dresden in 1925, and that, too, has its merits, in bringing the work to a grand, grim conclusion. One could just wish that the company

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had not made the thing look so grand and grim right from the beginning. Given that this is not an opera heaving with incident—the Faustian urge to know, to finger the whole world with the mind, is expressed more as a creeping search within the music than as a drama of devilry and damnation—it was a kind of madness to place the whole action behind a scrim. That gave the designer, Ronald Chase, the opportunity to interleave the scenes as if between the pages and diagrams of magical treatises that were projected onto the gauze, but (even if Peter Greenaway had not got there first, in "Prospero's Books") it disastrously separated and occluded the stage from the audience. And since the director, Frank Corsaro, had the characters simply drifting on and off as necessary, it was hard to feel that anybody—except the outstanding performers stranded in this gloom—cared much about what was going on.

If that negligence had been conveyed more positively, it might have appeared just, since Busoni's aim was that the drama should not answer all the questions but, rather, open themes that go on being explored in purely musical terms. In its nature as a book of music—as Prospero's book of musical charms and speculations, maybe—the piece is a marvel. It moves with slow ease and purpose over the whole reach of Western music from sixteenth-century polyphony to Schoenberg, and it lights off (or perhaps darkens off) on explorations that are charged much more with internal, contrapuntal motive power than with any concern to illustrate or parallel the stage action. One experiences the opera not as a narrative line but as a plane, on which the music can come forward to meet the story (ringing bells for Easter, for instance, or giving students in a tavern some lively altercations) or else recede into its own world of thought. This is a score, though, that needs a more sophisticated orchestral espousal than Christopher Keene, the conductor, was able to win from his players: one was aware of the pressure of his enthusiasm, not of the shadowy shapes and flights that should have been flowing from it. The chorus, too, sounded uninvolved and irregular, especially at times when invisible voices ought to have been making a wonderful effect from positions high above the stage.

Responsibilities therefore lay heavy on the principal soloists, and above all on William Stone, in the title role. Since everything we hear must seem an emanation from his mind, a sounding realization of his thought, Faust has to be onstage almost continuously; he also has to maintain a voice of firm authority, of a power to justify his inquiry into the secrets of the universe. Mr. Stone gave us that authority and that power, in a performance at once sure and insatiable, majestic and troubled by dreams. The role of Mephistopheles is a tough one, too: it lies high, and needs a character tenor with the vocal fitness of a virtuoso. Michael Rees Davis's performance was a triumph against his better, lyrical inclinations. There was also a fetching contribution from Eva Zseller as the Duchess of Parma, who wrests from the composer the opera's only aria.

We were some distance here from the physical joy in singing that runs through "The Tales of Hoffmann" and ebulliently ran through the Met's performance. Such joy was not so wholeheartedly a feature of Plácido Domingo's interpretation of the artist hero: he aptly portrays Hoffmann as a man anxious to catch up with the creatures of his own imagination, tugged on a tightwire between reality and desire. Something of this may come out of the singer's technical care, a maneuvering of his voice through the nasal sounds of French, but the excellent effect is a watchful reserve, overcome in moments of glorious abandonment—especially in the Venetian episode, which the Met now plays as the third act, after the encounters with the doll Olympia and the consumptive Antonia. This final tale also has a new set, by the production's designer, Günther Schneider-Siemssen: a view out from something very like the Ca' d'Oro onto the Grand Canal and a duly passing gondola. It's all in keeping with the visual ostentation of the rest of the show: with Spalanzani's clockwork laboratory, and with the chamber that provides Dr. Miracle with an irritating variety of exits. What the production lacks, and certainly not just in this display of amateur escapology, is some control over movement and posture and interaction. Instead, four great animals of the stage—Mr. Domingo, Carol Vaness as his loves, Susanne Mentzer as his companion, and Samuel Ramey as his demonic enemy—were pretty much allowed to get away with murder.

However, that didn't matter too much when self-display was so prominent a feature of the singing as well as of the acting. Ms. Vaness thoroughly enjoyed the ironies of presenting herself as a machine: she has the vocal resources, and the imagination, to peer round in amazement at Olympia's acrobatic ornaments even while she executes them. She then stepped past all that to present a simple, sensitive Antonia and a luscious Giulietta, the comparative dimness of the latter being due to the state in which Offenbach left the score, or perhaps to his realization that he had already asked quite a lot of his multiple-voiced prima donna. In the Met's conflation of the old Choudens and recent Oeser editions, quite a lot is also asked of Nicklausse, though Ms. Mentzer made it seem not a bar too much. Occasionally, the part took her lower than she wanted to go, but she went there safely nevertheless; everywhere else, she sang with a winning enthusiasm and freedom, and projected the figure of a young man so well that when the epilogue brought her back as Hoffmann's muse I thought for one glorious-ghastly moment that she must be appearing in drag. Mr. Ramey was in stupendous form, his voice a solid thrust of tone, unwavering, filling the house with severe and malignant power. The cruellest beauty, though, was that of the orchestra under James Levine: cruel because here was Offenbach—not Busoni, still less Beethoven or Bruckner—being treated to a lavishing of refinement and musicality.

Operatic and symphonic doings have, as usual, started ahead of the new-music ensembles, and the city has had to wait for Speculum Musicae to bring forward what was only a partial performance of Elliott Carter's latest work, "Trilogy," for oboe and harp. I heard the first complete account, which was given in June by the dedicatees, Heinz and Ursula Holliger, at the Pontino Festival, above what used to be the Pontine Marshes, south of Rome. The three items can be played separately—"Bariolage" as a harp solo, "Inner Song" as an oboe solo, "Immer neu" as a duo—but they fit together both practically and poetically: practically in that the solos can gain occasional pedal-tone interventions when the other instrument is available; poetically in that the pieces link up to form a commentary on, or demonstration of, a passage from one of Rilke's "Sonnets to Orpheus." "Bariolage" is "a play of pure forces"—what Rilke earlier in the sonnet refers to as existence remaining "enchanted for us"—and for Carter they turn out to be surprisingly diatonic forces, though that may be in the nature of the instrument. "Inner Song," where "words give out into the inexpressible," is a tremendous blow for the oboist: an almost seamless quasi-improvisation, wandering through the registers with hardy stealth and assurance. Finally, "Immer neu" is a release into dialogue: what is "ever new" for Rilke is music, which "builds out of the most tremulous stones her divinely consecrated house."

Also new from Carter, and also due to Heinz Holliger, is a Quintet for Piano and Winds, which had its first performances last month in Cologne and London. Mr. Holliger has been striving to increase the repertory for this combination, which appears to have been pioneered by Mozart, in his E-flat Quintet K.452, and used again, in a spirit of companionate rivalry, only by Beethoven among major composers. If the Carter piece has any relation to the prototype, other than instrumentation, it is perhaps to those Mozartian passages where the piano treads through dark chords laid in its path by the four wind instruments. Carter's work, though, is dark all through: a deep tunnel. No doubt its features will make more sense as one grows to know the place: that happens with any new work, not only for listeners but for performers. (There was still some certainty lacking in London.) Even with experience, though, the score is likely to remain unusually sombre, still, and lean for this composer. It begins very much that way, with the piano in rising chordal declamations, upright and solemn, effectively hushing the winds to pianissimo sustained notes, which develop into viscous harmony that sticks the piano in its own rhetoric. Then, at last, the texture starts to break up, allowing little solos and duets for the winds to escape: a beautiful long bassoon line, with its own bass-register punctuation; a sequence of passionate urgings passed from one instrument to another; a scarily high jet of sound from the E-flat clarinet. But the atmosphere remains formidable. ◆

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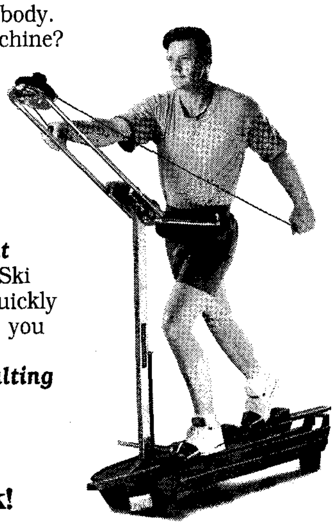

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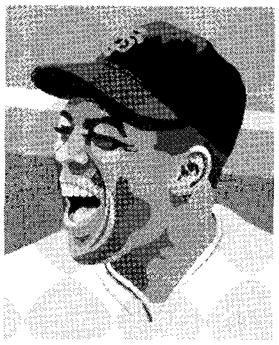

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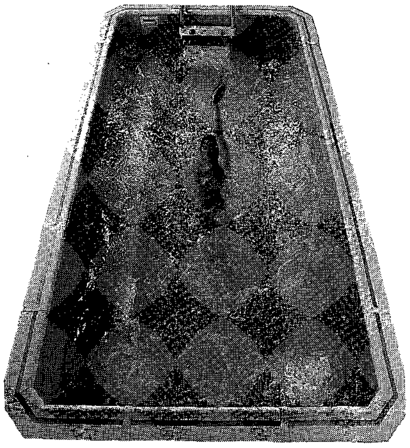

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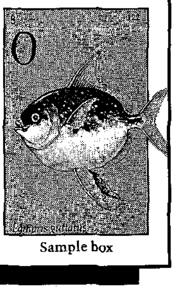


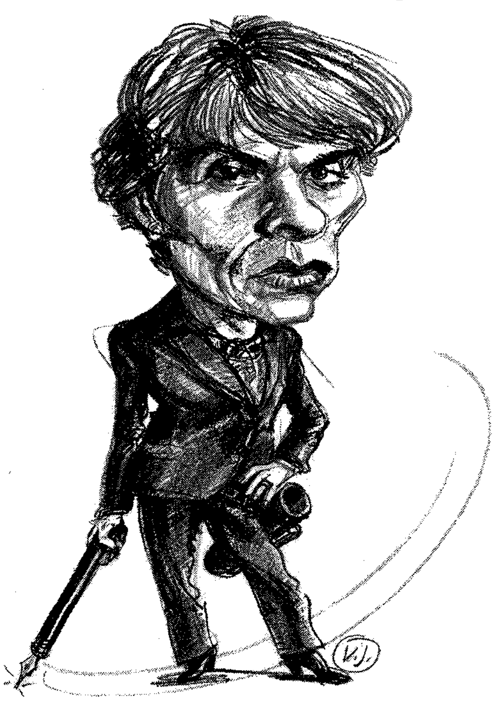
Sample box

BOOKS

SHE'S GOT PERSONALITY

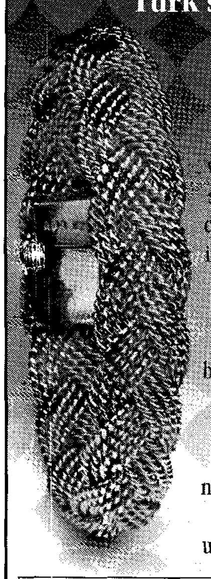
by John Updike

CAMILLE PAGLIA'S collection, “Sex, Art, and American Culture” (Vintage; $13), might have been more accurately, if less grandly, titled “Bits and Pieces Spun Off by a Cultural Celebrity Newly in Orbit.” The book, a paperback original, has Paglia confronting us on the cover—her face a provocative mix of stern teacher and Piafesque gamine—and her introduction thanks two people: her editor and her publicist. Why does a professor of humanities need a publicist? She has fallen prey, a confessional appendix explains, to “sudden notoriety,” and must undertake, to quote the introduction, “media sallies and jousts.” The introduction tells us, “The pieces in this volume, with one exception, were written during the last two years. Most of them were concentrated in the year following the appearance of my controversial op-ed article on Madonna in The New York *Times* in December 1990.” Besides that attention-getter, the volume contains appreciations of Elizabeth Taylor, rock music, and male homosexuals; a number of book reviews, including her lengthy diatribe “Junk Bonds and Corporate Raiders,” aimed not at Wall Street but at the shabby, feminist-tinged, French-influenced machinations within academia; a slightly doctored transcript of a freewheeling lecture she gave at M.I.T. called “Crisis in the American Universities”; a set of lecture notes that she, in her persona of dutiful student, took during a course, “East and West,” that she herself taught, with a colleague, Lily Yeh; an appreciation of Milton Kessler, a teacher of hers when she was an undergraduate at Harpur College, in Binghamton, New York; a brief but not too brief account of how she rose, in 1990 and '91, from obscurity to fame; a small array of cartoons and caricatures touching on Camille Paglia; and an eleven-page list of reviews and articles on the same terrific topic, in languages including Italian, German, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian, and with titles like “Woman Warrior,” “Hurricane Camille,” and “Catwoman of Academia.” It is lovely to see an intellectual so unabashedly bask in public attention. Reading the coverage of her M.I.T. lecture the next day in the Boston *Globe*, Paglia “felt like Faye Dunaway lounging in her mules and white satin negligée, her brand-new Oscar for *Network* glittering among the newspapers on her poolside glass table at dawn.” Not exactly the hard, gemlike glitter of Walter Pat (one of her admirations), but shimmering dreams of glory nevertheless—come true in this land, still, of opportunity.



Camille Paglia: Her operatic tough-girl voice rings out into the cloistered academic air.

She presents herself as a daughter of Italian-Americans and a spiritual child of the sixties, fed up with the whining feminism of spoiled upper-middle-class princesses and with the vapid academic chic of the wicked French trio Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida. She



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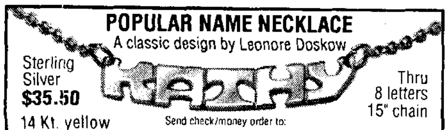

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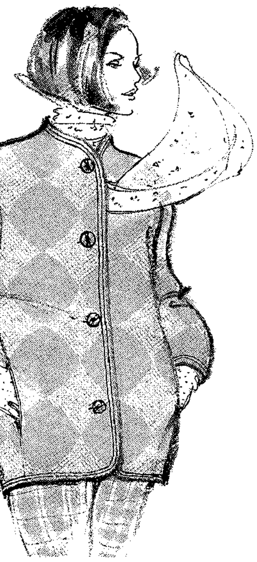
embraces post-fifties popular culture—rock music and films, above all—as an outburst of the Dionysian strain long repressed in the West. She is a lusty, feisty, bisexual scholar swooping into prominence from an outsider's perch, at the University of the Arts, in Philadelphia. "Junk Bonds and Corporate Raiders," once it disposes of the two weak-kneed books on the history of homosexuality that are its ostensible occasion, takes on a comic-strip vitality as the superheroine, in her sixties Frye boots and hot pants, clobbers one villain after another; you can almost see the capitalized concussion sounds in their little spiky balloons. POW! "American feminism's nose dive began when Kate Millett, that imploding beanbag of poisonous self-pity, declared Freud a sexist." BIFF! "Lacan: the French fog machine; a gray-flannel worry-bone for toothless academic pups; a twerpy, cape-twirling Dracula dragging his flocking stooges to the crypt." ZAP! "That damp sob sister, Hélène Cixous, with her diarrhea prose, or Luce Irigaray, the pompous lap dog of Parisian café despots doing her grim, sledgehammer elephant walk through small points." WHAMMO! "Heilbrun's late self-packaging as a feminist is a triumph of American commerce. The gauzy, ethnicity-evading style of her dazzlingly research-free books is the height of wishful, reactionary gentility. Women's studies is a jumble of vulgarians, bunglers, whiners, French faddicts, apparatchiks, doughface party-liners, pie-in-the-sky utopianists, and bullying, sanctimonious sermonizers." Take to the hills, evildoers; No-Nonsensewoman is here, with her trusty sidekicks Elvis Presley ("one of the most influential men of the century"), Jimi Hendrix ("We didn't need Derrida: we had Jimi Hendrix"), and Keith Richards ("My idol ... who made menacing music out of the Dionysian darkness never seen by society-obsessed Foucault"). The trouble with the French, if you must know, is that their sixties fizzled:

> The Sixties revolution in America ... followed and fulfilled its own inner historical pattern, a fall from Romanticism into Decadence. In France, in contrast, the brief student and worker revolt was put down by government action, an external force. Armchair French leftists like Foucault went into a permanent sulk. They never saw the errors of their ideas because those ideas, through



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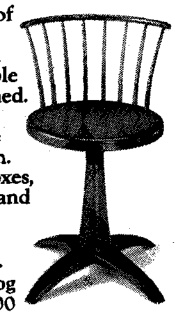

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lack of French moxie, were never tested against reality by being put through their full organic cycle. Hence the utter madness of French leftist pretensions being flaunted by milquetoast academics in America, which as a nation had made an epic journey to the heart of darkness and returned with tragic truths.

Paglia is a great loyalist to what she possessively calls "my Sixties generation," and also to her ethnic and religious antagonisms. The "milquetoast academics" have used the French frauds to perpetuate "the genteel high Protestant style of the country-clubs and corporate boardrooms" and to foment "a continuation not of Sixties leftism but of Fifties prep schools, with their snide, slick style, a cool, insufferably pretentious, nasal voice you can hear everywhere on Ivy League campuses." If her own tone isn't exactly mellifluous, so what? "The Italian philosophy of life espouses high-energy confrontation," she asserts in "Rape and Modern Sex War." In an essay on Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs and their "in-your-face content" she states, "Identity thrives by conflict and opposition." Sadomasochism is not merely a fact of life; "it is our deepest nature." Paglia told Sonya Friedman in an interview on CNN, "I feel that sex is basically combat. I feel that the sexes are at war." When Friedman, according to the transcript, exclaimed, "Oh, my goodness," her dauntless interviewee added, "I do feel it. It's like going to Atlantic City and gambling, okay? Every date is a gamble. Now, when you lose, you cannot go running to Mommy and Daddy. Sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose. I am a sexual adventuress."

Feminist views on rape and date rape represent "this stupid, pathetic, completely-removed-from-reality view of things that [Ivy League college women have] gotten from these academics who are totally off the wall, totally removed. Whereas my views on sex are coming from the fact that I am a football fan and I am a rock fan." This she spoke to Celia Farber, of *SPIN;* another interviewer she advised, "I mean, wake up to reality. This is male sex. Guess what, it's hot." And to *SPIN* again: "Feminists have no idea that some women like to flirt with danger because there is a sizzle in it." Risk comes with freedom, as the sixties understood, unlike the repressed fifties and the crybaby eighties: "My Sixties attitude is, yes, go

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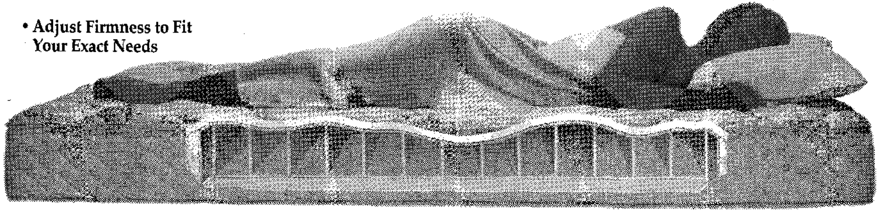
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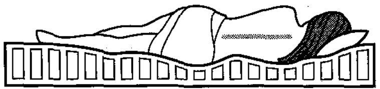
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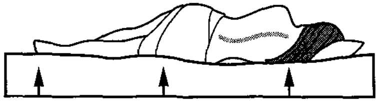
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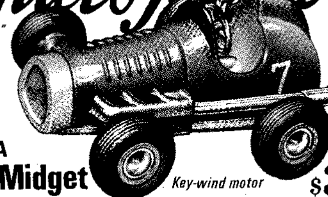

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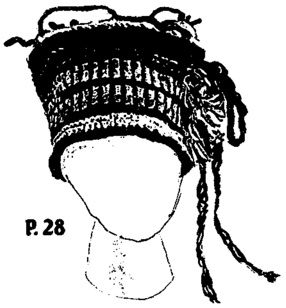
for it, take the risk, take the challenge—if you get raped, if you get beat up in a dark alley in a street, it's okay. . . . Go with it. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and go on. We cannot regulate male sexuality. The uncontrollable aspect of male sexuality is part of what makes sex interesting."

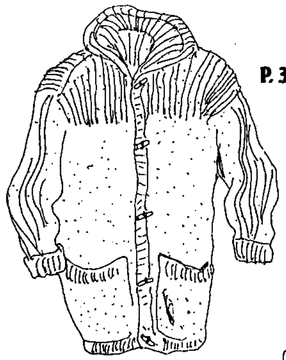
Paglia is a reassuring author for a man to read. She is as loyal to the male gender as an Italian matriarch is to her father, husband, and son even if all are involved in the Mafia. She sees men as incorrigible, sizzle-producing brutes whom white, middle-class feminists are trying to castrate, "to make eunuchs out of them." The snag with Sensitive New Age Guys is that they can't, biologically, exist. The recent embarrassments of Woody Allen gave Paglia a new chance to expatiate on "the lugubriousness of typical feminist views." She told a reporter, "They keep trying to redefine the American male into this eunuchized, castrated, supportive male. But that's not the answer. Woody's nerdlike, non-threatening intellectual persona was just as sexual a persona, and now women can't stand that it was *only* a persona. This is a wonderful cold douche for feminist naivete." Why, some feminists are so naïve, Paglia has written, that they fail to see "what is for men the eroticism or fun element in rape, especially the wild, infectious delirium of gang rape." You can't blame the poor chaps, really. "Men must struggle for identity against the overwhelming power of their mothers. Women have menstruation to tell them they are women. Men must do or risk something to be men." So, be warned, ladies: "Masculinity is aggressive, unstable, combustible. It is also the most creative cultural force in history."

Paglia's opinions are gruff and deliberately sensational but not unreal. The roots of sexual attraction and excitement do go deeper than our codes of civilized behavior. There is a tragic grandeur to the gulf between the sexes. The first chapter of Paglia's magnum opus, "Sexual Personae," setting forth her cosmology under the title of "Sex and Violence, or Nature and Art," is, simply, magnificent—dense with stark truths and sweeping insights. We seem embarked, in a Nietzschean gale, upon one of those thrilling overviews of Western culture, such as André Malraux's "Voices of Silence" or Erich Auerbach's "Mimesis," which leave us with a map in our heads. By the end, it feels less a survey than a curiously ornate harangue. Her percussive style—one short declarative sentence after another—functions not so much to elicit the secrets of books as to hammer them into submission. Stretched on the rack of her taut opposition of female/Dionysian/chthonian versus male/Apollonian/skyey, one author after another is made to confess to sexual crossover, androgyny, and sadomasochism. Many of her readings are brilliant—Whitman and Henry James will never look the same—but many seem overreadings. Hawthorne is theorized to have added "w" to the family name Hathorne as a way of adding "woman"—"his father's name blasphemously hermaphroditized"—in counterbalance to his mother's maiden name of Manning. We begin with the bust of Nefertiti, "a haughty face . . . carved out of the chaos of nature," and end with the verbal amputations and shearings of Emily Dickinson, who is described as the American Marquis de Sade. We are left with a chthonian stew of simmering cut-up bits. Repeated dissections have demonstrated that nature is cruel and sex is part of nature. Is sex therefore *only* cruel? In a book all about sex, we miss a feel of the organic—its springiness, its "give." Though Paglia is very free, in a scholarly work, with the first-person-singular pronoun, and flavors her Ph.D.-ese with slang, the voice stays flat and metallic. The reader longs for the mercy of a qualification, a doubt, a hesitation; Paglia's uncompanionable prose affords little sense of exploration occurring before our eyes, of tentative motions of thought reflected in a complex syntax.

Paglia's hammering, flaunting, outrageous manner is that of a performer; when she is literally onstage, as in the M.I.T. talk, she is in her element, and very funny. The laughter and latent hostility of the audience stimulate her to skits wherein Foucault becomes the vacuum cleaner that all the ducklings follow thinking it is their mother, or the fashionable French intellectuals become "zebra Naugahyde furniture":

> So they went heavily into this, okay, their whole house is furnished in it. Then suddenly, twenty years down the road, someone like me appears and says, "Guess what—that's *out* now. Not only that, but it was in terrible taste to begin with." So you can see why they're mad at me. They're mad be-





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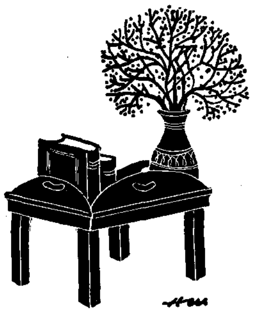
cause they're stuck with that furniture! They have twenty years of furniture!

Her operatic tough-girl voice rings out into the cloistered academic air: "We have got to let the mind open *freely*, freely toward sex, and understand that from the moment you're on a date with a man, the idea of sex is *hovering* in the air—*hover*, *hover*, *hover*, okay?" Lest the reader miss some of her performance, she supplies her miming in brackets:

> Silly me—at the end of class, I would, like, *go*—go to the library, gotta do something, go to a movie, right? And I would see some of my fellow graduate students clustering around the teacher in this odd way, and I thought, "What are they doing?" And then at the end of lectures by famous people, I would see them, and there's a weird motion they would get.... And it's sort of like a zombie look they get on their faces, and their bodies begin to *undulate*, you know the way seaweed does [*imitates undulating seaweed*]. They're moving into *Toady Mode!*

This is effective teaching, no doubt, teaching being a kind of entertaining. But does Paglia's jubilant demonization of feminism and academia constitute effective criticism? For all her self-professed intellectual passion and her genuine erudition, she strikes one as less serious, somehow—less gravely involved in issues of language and culture—than the ironical, verbose, and easy-to-deride Derrida. She is happy with short takes. The world of bites exhilarates her: "With reporters . . . I'm in my element, like Roz Russell in *His Girl Friday*, a boisterous, wisecracking, machine-gun American verbal style. . . . Talking with them, I feel connected to a vast communications network." Her reviews and op-ed pieces are lively; she does not stint or soften her message. In a little review of Marjorie Garber's "Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety," after complaining about "lumpish patches of tedious Lacan jargon" and the author's ignorance of Paglia's special areas of expertise (classical antiquity and pop culture), she comes up with a true illumination of the mystery of cross-dressing: "The drag queen defies victim-centered feminism by asserting the dominance of woman in the universe."



The assertion, and not the defiance, is the helpful point, phrased a bit differently in "Sexual Personae": "A woman putting on men's clothes merely steals social power. But a man putting on women's clothes is searching for God." Paglia's awareness of the life-enabling religious impulses moving beneath the quirks of human culture is her most valuable and refreshing trait, though it leads her to overvalue the chimeras of pop culture. Is Madonna, with her thin talents and hard edges, quite the Second Coming of womanhood described in Paglia's two pieces on her, which extoll her as "an international star of staggering dimensions," "the future of feminism," and a global force who, "with an instinct for world-domination gained from Italian Catholicism . . . has rolled like a juggernaut over the multitude of her carping critics"? Does Elizabeth Taylor's sometimes hefty embodiment of a violet-eyed alternative to the "antiseptic American blondeness" of Doris Day, Debbie Reynolds, Sandra Dee, and Meryl Streep ("with her boring decorum") really make her "the greatest actress in film history"? And Paglia's mooniness over male rock stars is a real nostalgia trip, to the far edge of female adolescence.

Another girlish item in "Sex, Art, and American Culture" is the long introduction that the Yale University Press persuaded her to reduce to a page for "Sexual Personae" but that the softer-hearted editors at Vintage have included entire here. It is all about the Paglia persona, self-dramatized as "a scholar with stars in her eyes." We learn about her girlhood fascination with classical antiquity and Egypt in the same paragraph that tells of "an affectionate calico she-cat named Teabag who ferociously patrolled the sidewalk and fire escape" of Paglia's apartment building in New Haven. With the ingenuous egoism of a teen-ager, she lists her pet peeves, her likes and dislikes: Sade over Rousseau, hierarchy over egalitarianism, rock and roll over Greek tragedy, astrology over rational science, nature over nurture, "verbally aggressive" "visionary rabbis" as teachers over New Critics with their "sunny Christian courtesy," the thirties over the fifties. "The prewar era, in the shadow of the Depression, was a period not only of female achievement but of beauty, glamour, and style, values that I found in ancient Egypt but nowhere in my own world, whose apple-cheeked dictator was Doris Day." (Paglia really should get to know Doris Day—a renegade Catholic and no prig, and [illegible] even a natural blonde, early photographs indicate.) Before she latched onto Frazer and Freud, Paglia spent three high-school years studying her first heroine, Amelia Earhart; like a dashing early aviator, Paglia flies by the seat of her pants. Her ethnic prejudices (safely anti-Wasp), her personal psychodrama as an Italian woman full of male animus, and her joy in the gestures of assault for their

IOWA

The plains of Iowa dreamed, or seemed to dream,
the prairie dogs erect above their dens,
the corn unripening by the local Gulf.
We slept through May in the landlady's single bed,
like two wives—creaky, uncomfortable as sin,
the eagerness of sin a sin itself.
Airless at dawn, at dusk a tinderbox,
your shoebox apartment shared the slanting roof.
The alley lay in moonlight's palest talc.
One night a shout—a file of naked freshmen
streamed away, white asses hot as dimes,
onward into forgetfulness. Youth, ah youth.
We slept, and woke, and slept the day away,
careless as pigeons with their broken quills.

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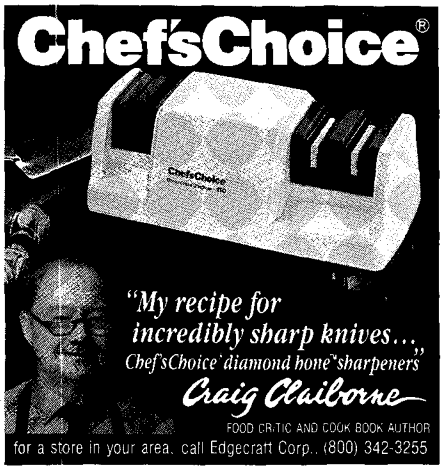

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own sake all give her critical and sociological judgments a certain tilt. She is in danger of getting trapped in a shtick. Her reactions and opinions, so initially startling, become predictable, and automatically raucous. From her mentor Harold Bloom, perhaps, she has received the idea that literature is a power game, a matter of ousting and supplanting; her own determination to strive, struggle, and triumph becomes the most conspicuous thing about her, eclipsing the considerable worth of her learning, ingenuity, and fearlessness. In the once rejected introduction to "Sexual Personae" she describes its ambition in terms of bulk:

> Women have never written epic, the longest and most military of literary forms, taking in the gods and heaven and hell. In its excessive scale and all-fencing inclusiveness, *Sexual Personae* is a Roman omnibus, a gazetteer of points of cultural transfer.... The two volumes of *Sexual Personae*, with the author as Amazon epic quester, may be the longest book yet written by a woman, exceeding in this respect even George Eliot's hefty *Middlemarch*. That book contains as its moral irritant a huge unrealized project, Casaubon's *Key to All Mythologies*, which I dutifully complete here.

Poor Casaubon, readers of "Middlemarch" will recall, sank disconsolately to death in the throes of writer's block, unable to bring his "Key" together. One awaits with some trepidation the second volume of "Sexual Personae," in which Paglia has promised to "show how movies, television, sports, and rock music embody all the pagan themes of classical antiquity." Can the crass and ephemeral artifacts of the mass-entertainment industry offer her animus and mental energy fodder comparable to the masterpieces of Western culture she ripped through in Volume I? Can she add significantly to the already vast commentary that her generation of the sixties, the most self-impressed and self-righteous generation alive, has devoted to its own pop envelope? Tune in the further adventures of the Amazon quester. One cannot help applauding her, as a unique performer on the cultural stage, while wondering if performance, in even this dim-witted age of diluted Dionysianism, is all there is. Her solemn compiling of her own notices in "Sex, Art, and American Culture" implies that stirring up press attention is in itself an achievement. Maybe so, but *ars est longa*, and publicity is short. ♦

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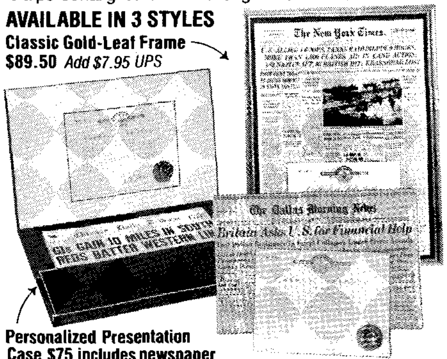

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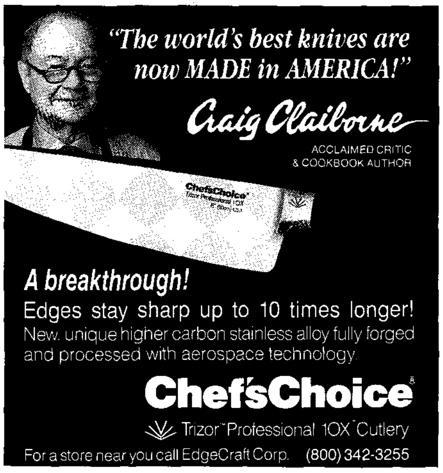

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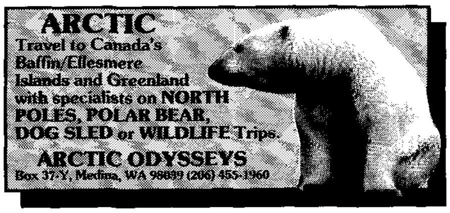

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BOOKS

WHITE GODDESS

by George Steiner

THE facts have long been known. Besotted by the racist, Jew-hating theories and rhetoric of Doktor Bernhard Förster, Nietzsche's sister, Elisabeth, not only married the ranting fool but set out with him in February, 1886, to establish a utopian Aryan homeland in the wilderness of Paraguay. This macabre enterprise and its predictable ruin would merit no more than a footnote in prehistories of Nazism were it not that Nietzsche himself became marginally but negatively involved, and that Elisabeth was to exercise a baleful influence over his last years and his posthumous destiny.

What happened to the Paraguayan community after Förster's death, in June, 1889, and Madame Förster-Nietzsche's return to Germany, in August, 1893? A minor nugget, but a nugget nonetheless, was waiting for investigation. No Nietzsche biographer, no historian of Teutonic racism or of the subterranean but unbroken links between nineteenth-century German Aryan programs and recent Latin-American dictatorships saw the lode gleaming venomously in that remote dust. It is Ben Macintyre's great merit to have done so. Taking Bruce Chatwin for his model—Chatwin's voice and gait mark almost every page—Macintyre, who is the New York bureau chief of the London *Times*, set out to find Nueva Germania and to trace its afterlife. A sparkling idea, and its realization, in "Forgotten Fatherland: The Search for Elisabeth Nietzsche" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $22), yields vivid travel writing and information of a ghostly but fascinating sort.

In true Chatwin style, our explorer relies not on the latest cartography but on the travelogues, more or less fictional, of his nineteenth-century predecessors and of the Försters themselves. It is the record of Paraguayan horrors and navigations by one Sir Woodbine Parish (the apposite lunacy of the name!) that leads Macintyre upriver. It is Cunninghame Graham's famous description of the Gran Chaco wastelands that guides him toward the spectral vestiges of Nueva Germania and of the white goddess who ruled there. But the weave is cunning: at Asunción, it is the h[illegible]f-built monstrosities bequeathed to Paraguay by the pro-Hitler regime of the Stroessner gang that foreshadow Macintyre's goal.

The voyage proves appropriately awful. At its best, Paraguay appears to be a mixture of corruption, brutality, and morass. Seen from the deck of the river steamer *Blanca Doña*, jetties are invariably broken, and huts are jumbled in a sea of filth. Francisco, the most sociable of the four-man crew, is driven to angry distraction by a ragged child playing tunelessly on a reed whistle. He "threw himself down on the floor of the wheelhouse next to me," Macintyre writes. " 'Fuck,' he said, 'fuck, fuck, fuck.' " Heart-of-darkness itinerary—stenches and grotty *misère* in Graham Greene country. Not at all what the Försters, personally blessed by Wagner and confident of the Holy Grail, had in view.

Macintyre sardonically cites their dreams and promises. Beyond the choked rivers and thorn-spiked jungle, beyond the windblown pampas, lay a new Eden. Milk and honey would flow. The natives would be privileged to serve their new masters. The Aryan colony not only would be self-sufficient in food and building materials but would soon export its plenty and, above all, exploit its mineral wealth and hidden gold. Like so many conquistadores before him, Dr. Förster was obsessed with imaginings of Eldorado, of the lost city in the secret interior, once ruled by *der Wei[illegible]e Heiland*, the mysterious white king of whom Lohengrin and Siegfried were radiant cousins. Elisabeth's idyll, published in Germany in late 1888, is priceless:

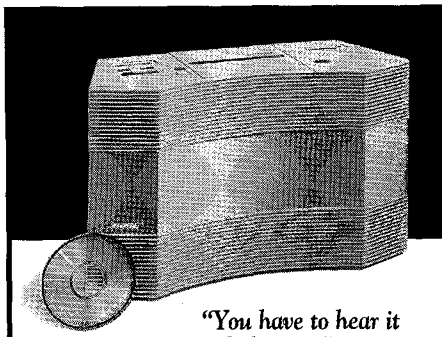
> After supper we sit in the garden and look into the distance. . . . There are fields, gilded with red from the evening sun on both sides of the river, interspersed with fields of lowing cattle. What a peaceful, happy picture this affords, nothing is alien. No, everything is homely. . . . The

> singing of German men reaches us from a garden a little way off. . . . The song is "I don't know why, but I'm so sad," which the German sings when he is particularly happy. They are singing in the distance with love and pride and yearning. Up into the star-studded southern night sky, into the mysterious gloom of the jungle: '*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt.*'

This is one of the rare times when Macintyre misses a trump. "I don't know why, but I'm so sad" is, of course, the opening verse of the Lorelei ballad written by that detestable Jew Heinrich Heine.

The fates were not kind. Nueva Germania turned out to be hardly viable. With the regal exception of the Försters, for whom a mansion had been erected, the settlers squatted in mud-brick shacks without proper drainage. The rains were torrential, but clean water was in short supply. There was no time to build roads, because meagre crops had to be hacked out of red earth. The local peons, far from being cheerful auxiliaries, showed themselves both lazy and lacking in respect for their blue-eyed masters. Livestock wilted in the sodden heat. By July, 1888, a quarter of the original settlers had quit, in more or less rancorous despair. Soon one Julius Klingbeil began challenging the Förster-Nietzsche autocracy. This ungrateful spirit stormed back to the fatherland and published the facts in a book he entitled "Revelations," which ran to a hundred and sixty pages. Polemics flew, but, despite untiring propaganda put out by the Försters, fresh funds and new pioneers failed to materialize. Herr Doktor sought solace in heavy drinking at the Hotel del Lago, in San Bernadino, a German nest outside Asunción. He took poison during the night of June 2, 1889. As he lay dying, his saddest insight might have been that the Jews whom he had striven to leave behind so as to found a purer world order had come to Paraguay four centuries earlier.

Elisabeth decamped to Germany, but she struggled on. She lied about heroic Bernhard's death. She assured her German listeners, "The climate of Paraguay is like paradise to me," and added that the greatest danger was from "the colony tiger, which creeps into the huts of new settlers and frightens the poor souls with humming and sniffing, but always turns out to be just a good old ox." It took her only five months to compose the purple



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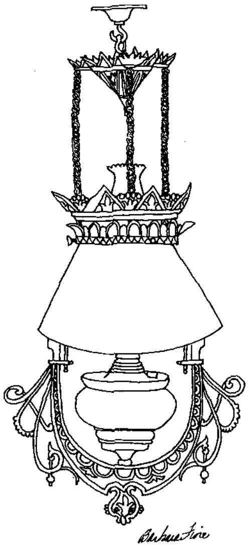
mendacities of "Bernhard Förster' Colony New Germany in Paraguay.' When she returned to Eden in August 1892, a handful of the faithful acclaime her as a literal savior. But it was too late Characteristically, she left in style a yea later. "Though a pack of enraged colonists, in lynch mob mood, bayed at he heels, she walked out of New Germany—she did not run," Macintyr writes. An ever loftier mission awaite her homecoming.

In early January, 1889, her brothe had suffered a mental collapse in Turin One of the most powerful, lucid mind in Western history was to vegetate mor or less incommunicado until deat came, in 1900. At the time of his breakdown, Friedrich Nietzsche was know to a few former academic colleagues, to tiny circle of acquaintances, and to on or two European cultural critics wit exceptional antennae. His books, printed largely at his own expense, la remaindered and unnoticed. The rocke rise to fame which blazed around th stricken titan's name even before hi death, the diffusion and the impact o Nietzsche's thought in the early twentieth century were in the main orchestrated by his sister. She became an impresario of genius: she made a shrine o the family house in which her speechles brother dwelt; she directly inspired th hagiographies that began to appea about him; together with devoted acolytes, she edited and popularized hi writings. In the process, Elisabet Förster-Nietzsche herself grew into legend and an ornament of the Germa nation.

As we now know, this formidabl feat was the consequence not only o unflinching energy, of sheer strategi virtuosity in regard to public relation and the prevailing hunger for heroi myths, but of intentional falsification Elisabeth bowdlerized or else suppresse outright whatever facts might cast shadow on Nietzsche's superhuman [illegible]dom and the purity of his person. Sh doctored letters and documents. Wors of all, she edited his published but almost unknown texts and the voluminous manuscript material—which wa given the resonant title "The Will t Power"—in deliberately dishonest way To a considerable degree, the herald of the "blond beast," the cold flirte with racism, the singer of war, an the superman with which world opinion identified Nietzsche—all are products of Elisabeth's elisions, alterations or erasures of context, and opportune forgeries. It needed half a century of scholarship to undo her labors, and there are truths we may never wholly recover.

The particular points at issue in Macintyre's tale are Nietzsche's alleged anti-Semitism and his attitude toward Förster and his Paraguayan pipe dreams. In manipulated retrospect, Elisabeth portrayed her brother not only as sympathetic to Förster's Jew-hatred but as an admiring backer of the colony. In the matter of Judaism, Nietzsche's actual stance was complex and unstable. He condemned the strains in Judaism which had generated Christianity and had burdened the Western consciousness with moral guilt and enfeebling compassion. He found the legalism of Judaic ethics, its enforcements of altruism, exasperating. He contrasted the Mosaic and Talmudic sorrows with the pagan joy and the combative amoralities of the Hellenic. Within decadent modernity, however, he singled out the Jews as by far the most gifted and perceptive of peoples. He derived mocking fun from what he saw as the antitheses between Jewish finesse and cosmopolitanism and the boorish provinciality of the new German imperium. Above all, he loathed what he called the pestilential vulgarity of rising Teutonic anti-Semitism.



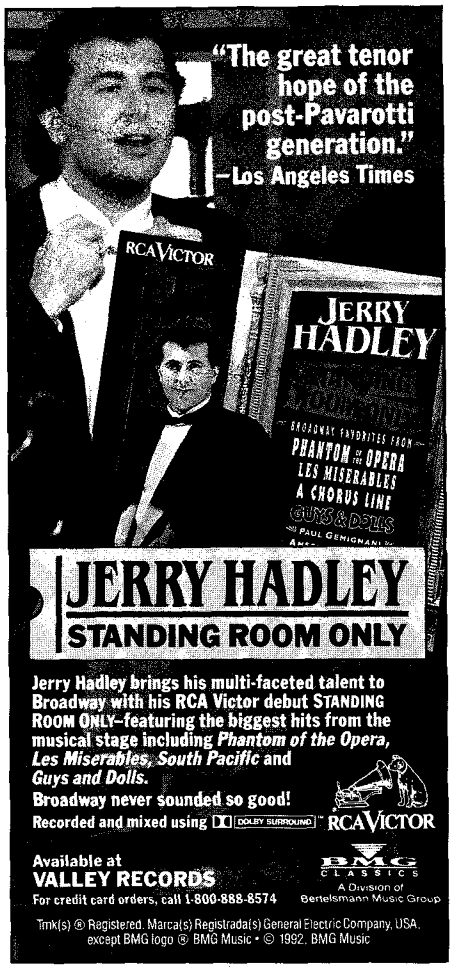
Bernhard Förster and his hooligans, and the obscurantist mishmash of eugenics and Aryan myths espoused by Förster and his Valkyrie wife, filled Nietzsche with bitter derision. He refused to attend Elisabeth's wedding. Asked to join—or, at least, provide financial support for—Nueva Germania, Nietzsche drafted a letter in which he suggested that all German Jew-baiters be packed off to the delights of Paraguay. Should the lunatic scheme succeed, he wrote, he would seek to forget the hateful movement that had spawned it. Should it fail, he would "rejoice in the death of an anti-Semitic project." At no time was he taken in by the glowing lies of Förster's and Elisabeth's bulletins. As Nietzsche's twilight neared, his utter contempt for Germanic chauvinism and racism attained hysterical clairvoyance. He intimated clearly the nightmares to come out of Wagner. He read in Bismarck the ambitions that two world wars would struggle to fulfill. His hatred of just that mixture of bourgeois philistinism and mob instincts which Förster had embodied grew paranoiac. "How much dreary heaviness, lameness, dampness, sloppiness. How much *beer* there is in the German intellect!" he wrote. And how much murderousness.

All this had to be hidden or blotted out if Nietzsche was to provide a breviary for the Reich. The Wagner-Nietzsche alliance, broken so drastically by Nietzsche himself, had to be restored to a mythical unison. Enthralled by Elisabeth's cleansing and monumentalization of her dead brother, German academics and camp followers nominated her for the Nobel Prize in Literature no fewer than three times. Hitler gave personal and official support to the Nietzsche archive. Nazi pundits hastened to kiss hands. When Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche died, in November, 1935—a few years after Cosima Wagner, with whom she had sustained Olympian relations—her vision of Nietzsche's teachings and national role seemed writ in marble. The Third Reich mourned.

But what of Paraguay? Had anything survived? Ben Macintyre discovered a parody of Valhalla:

> I stood in the middle of Försterhof, Elisabeth's great mansion, and watched a couple of piglets wrestling across the tiles of what was once her dining room. Nothing was left but some posts of *quebracho* wood which had supported the verandah roof, riddled with termite holes. You could make out the avenue of orange trees she had planted leading to the house, now twisted and overgrown. The mandioca was growing wild where the vegetable patch had been, and the jungle had rioted over her garden, quickly taking over the land painfully cleared by her "childlike" peons.

In these surroundings, Macintyre interviewed descendants of the Aryan van-



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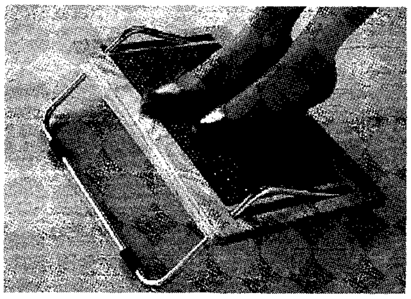

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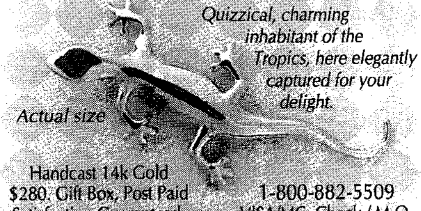

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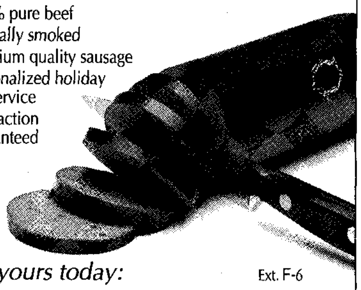
guard. Ghosts among ghosts. They harbor uneasy knowledge of Josef Mengele, the death-bringer in Auschwitz, who slithered past them into even deeper hiding. "I played them my tapes of Wagner and they smiled, but it meant nothing," Macintyre says. Their grandparents had been subjected to falsehood and exploitation at the hands of Förster. "But of Elisabeth the memories were always kinder: 'A brave woman,' they said, 'and beautiful.' Her charm was horribly enduring." Weeds were sprouting from soil that the Führer had sent from Germany to adorn Förster's grave. Now and again, a visitor would come and bring flowers. But, inevitably, in fear of racial pollution, the colonists' descendants have interbred. They constitute a small tribe more blond and blue-eyed with every generation, but palpably degenerate. Before long, a clutch of albinos, stupefied with drink and the heat of the swamps, carrying inside their dimmed psyches a bizarre remembrance of racial supremacy, will mark the end of the New Germany.

Would that Mr. Macintyre had stuck to this spellbinding retrieval. A shorter book—a longish documentary—might have rivalled Chatwin's classic "In Patagonia." Unfortunately, we are offered potted summaries of Nietzsche's philosophy and of the German cultural-political background. These are poor stuff. He says, for example, "Nietzsche is like no other writer, in German or any other language." As it happens, Nietzsche's aphoristic, lapidary style could not have been arrived at without the clear precedent of Lichtenberg. It is now almost certain that Nietzsche's imperious indictment of benevolence follows closely on that of Max Stirner. The "rudeness," the bias toward violence which Macintyre cites, often echoes the enraged pessimism of de Maistre. The suppositions advanced by Macintyre in "Forgotten Fatherland" as to the relations, both psychological and material, between Elisabeth and her illustrious brother in their earlier years contribute little to that thorny conundrum.

It is the old story. One touches on the Nietzsches at one's peril. But the revelations out of Paraguay are indeed, as the Michelin guide would put it, worth the detour. ♦



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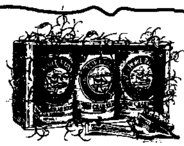

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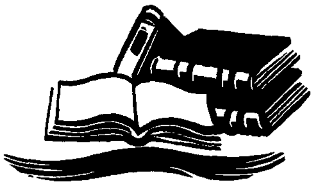


BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Book
y Robert Grudin (Random House; $19)

FROM the first page, where a dog yearns for his master, one is gripped y passionate partisanship for the man vho inspires such feeling in his pet. He s Professor Adam Snell, the author of n unreviewed and remaindered novel, nd he is missing—possibly lost in "the ungle" at the center of campus, where a nutant grass is as dangerously overgrown as the egos of Snell's colleagues. A local police detective pounces on evidence of the systematic destruction of nell's writing and, probably, of Snell. This psychopathic wrecking proves to be nly a case in point, however, as the literature faculty conspire to debunk and bolish literary art. Called by some an cademic novel, this is more like a suspense thriller on the unlikely subject of ooks ranging from obscure academic reatises to commercial fluff; even footnotes contribute, rising up in angry chatter to comment on the text. "Book" is lso a satirical comedy, whose sendup of iterary practice is itself a lesson in how o write, read, and love books.

The Death of Napoleon
y Simon Leys, translated from the French
y Patricia Clancy and the author
Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $15)

A BRIEF, quizzical novel in which Napoleon escapes from St. Helena n a Portuguese seal-hunting boat. He is uised, improbably, as a sailor, and a ouble is left on the island: so far so good. But the ship bypasses Bordeaux, where Napoleon was supposed to make a connection with a man in a gray top hat, and the elicate machinery of his return to power s forever clogged. He lands instead on a eserted wharf in Antwerp, with nothing ut his sailor's pay in hand. So he makes is solitary way to France—not without xistential angst, and not without the kindness of strangers—and lives out an almost regular life, of the kind that history never dreamed for him. The book is small, but it touches gracefully on large matters: what greatness is, and how it manifests itself; what identity is, and whether we possess it within or encounter it outside ourselves, reflected in the faces of the people we meet along the way.

GENERAL

Eclipse: The Last Days of the C.I.A.
by Mark Perry (Morrow; $25)

THIS lively, persuasive account by an investigative reporter explains that the decline of the C.I.A. occurred for several reasons. The most obvious is that, with the end of the Cold War, the agency's anti-Communist mission ended, too. Another is technology: photographs taken by satellites in space have replaced human spies on the ground. A third reason is the agency's loss of intellectual independence. In the last decade, assessments by C.I.A. analysts that did not fit Administration policies were often discouraged or ignored. In the summer of 1990, Bush refused to heed the agency's warning that Saddam Hussein would invade Kuwait. After the invasion, the Administration pressured the C.I.A.'s director, William Webster, to resign. Mr. Perry suggests that Webster's successor, Robert Gates, was attractive to the White House in part for his political pliancy: he had overruled analysts who accurately reported the decay of Soviet power when the Reagan and Bush Administrations preferred to go on believing in the Red Menace.

City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920
by Timothy J. Gilfoyle (Norton; $24.95)

IN 1857, the rector of Trinity Church told the richest congregation in New York City, "During a ministry of more than fifty years I have not been in a house of ill-fame more than ten times!" What surprised his listeners was not his admission but his moderation. New York's expansion in the nineteenth century attracted foreign immigrants and rural migrants, a disproportionate number of them men. The lack of decent jobs for women meant that prostitution was the most lucrative vocation available. With supply and demand in place, a booming market in sexual relations emerged. Mr. Gilfoyle maps the development of New York's sex districts, explains the economics of the skin trade, and recounts major scandals of the period. Parts of his story are startling: girls under fifteen provided a significant proportion of the city's prostitutes (for much of the century, the legal age of consent was ten). Their youth made them less likely to become pregnant (a plus for madams) and less likely to carry disease (a plus for customers). Mr. Gilfoyle's book combines prodigious research with an easy narrative style, and where evidence is thin he offers well-reasoned speculation rather than scholarly prevarication.

Zinky Boys: Soviet Voices from the Afghanistan War
by Svetlana Alexievich, translated from the Russian by Julia and Robin Whitby (Norton; $19.95)

IN an introduction to this oral history, Larry Heinemann emphasizes the obvious similarities between the Soviet experience in Afghanistan and the American experience in Vietnam. The voices include a cross-section of officers and enlisted men, nurses and women civilian employees, reflecting the diversity of those who served. For most, the experience was an unmitigated disaster. They recall drug use and corruption, and even soldiers murdering unpopular officers. And many resent the fact that popular disillusion with the war has deprived them of their due recognition as heroes. Yet none of the veterans started out as cynics, and the book occasionally records their bewilderment at discovering that the Afghans they thought they had come to help didn't like them. In two respects, the Soviet and the American stories diverge: Russian medical supplies and equipment were scarce or unusable, and the Russian public was told next to nothing about the war until it was over. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

JUST DESSERTS

by Adam Gopnik

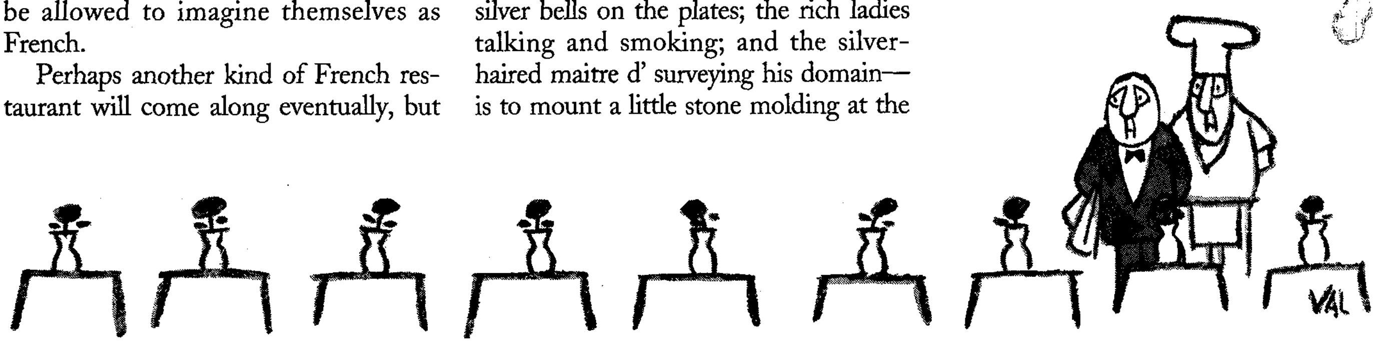
HAS anyone adequately mourned the passing, during the last year, of the classic New York French restaurant—an institution that developed just after the New York World's Fair of 1939 and now seems to be on the way out? Not long ago, on a chilly Saturday morning, I went for a long walk in midtown and decided to head over to one of the most famous of these places. The night before, I had noticed that of about fifty French restaurants listed in a 1980 New York restaurant guidebook thirty-two had disappeared, many in the last eighteen months. Le Coup de Fusil, Le Cygne, Dodin-Bouffant, La Gamelle, Le Lavandou, L'Olivier, Le Paris Bistro—all of them gone, with their framed travel posters or sub-Fauve murals, their little red lampshades centered on tables snowy with stiff linen. They had a style that was all their own, and were nothing like the French restaurants one actually finds in France. Even the grandest restaurants in Paris are essentially austere. They are meant to be settings, backdrops. Their décor is supplied by the guests and by the food itself; waves of authentic Frenchness roll into them each night. The New York French restaurant had, instead, to create an illusion of Frenchness, in which the colorless guests would, for a couple of hours anyway, be allowed to imagine themselves as French.

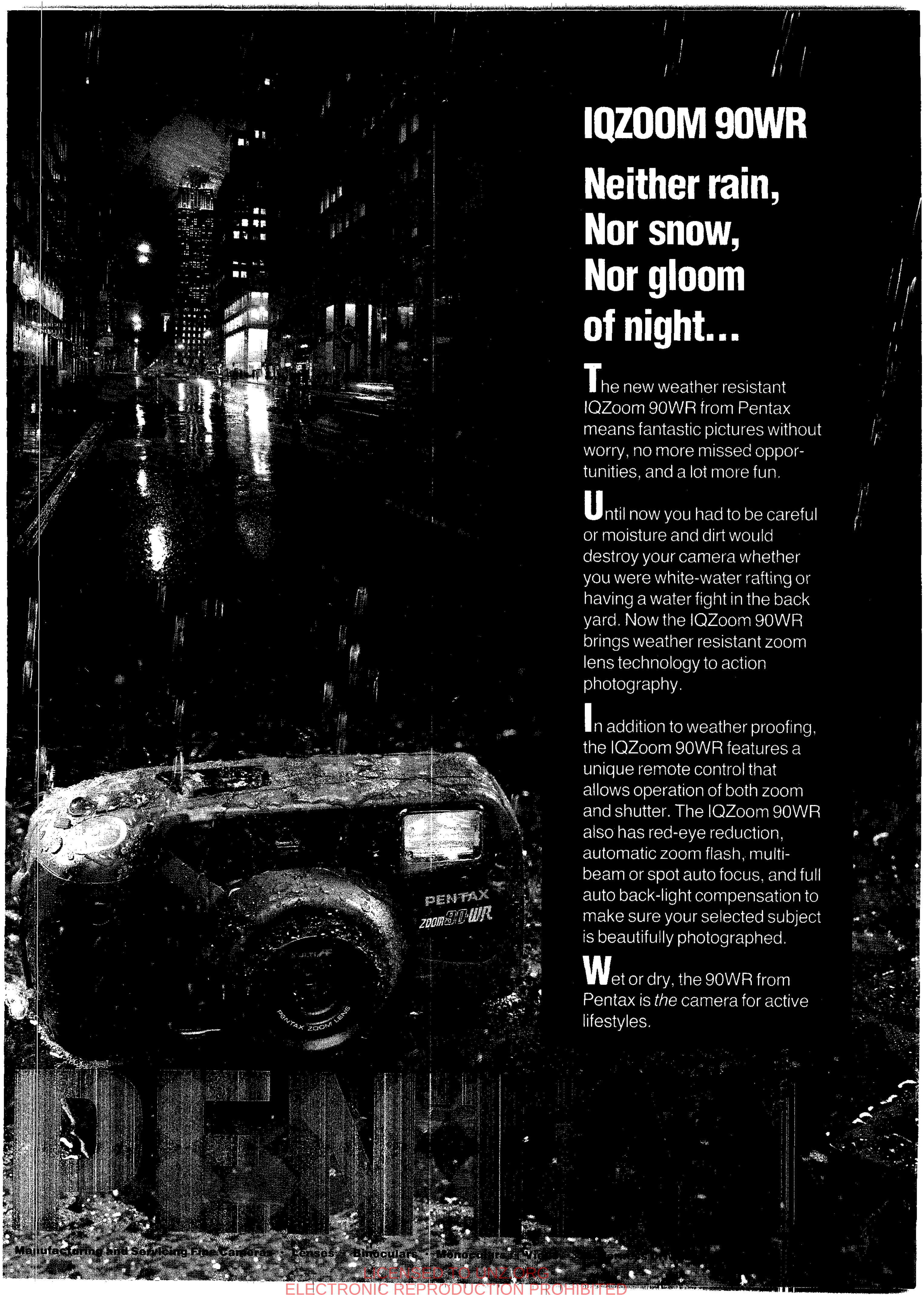
Perhaps another kind of French restaurant will come along eventually, but at the moment only simple, bistro-style French restaurants seem to be flourishing. A feeling of self-reproach, earned or unearned, is what haunts the city right now, and ambitious restaurants are among its victims. Although the business cycle is the inevitable wheel on which American history has always revolved, no American has ever quite believed in the business cycle as a *cycle.* When the economy expands, we think that it is because of our energy and intelligence and canniness, and when, as always happens, it contracts we search for some flaw, some moral failing within our own conduct. The Pavilion-era New York French restaurants have come to seem like one of those moral failings: the hard times in the city have killed them off as neatly as they have killed the society real-estate agents.

Or nearly. A few of these restaurants remain, and whenever I'm walking in the mid-Fifties I like to look in a window of one of the most imposing of them. It is hard to look into this particular place, because the windows are covered with curtains that stick up from the bottom. The only way you can peek inside at the whole glorious scene—the pastel murals on the far walls; the gleaming red leather banquettes; the busy waiters and the even busier busboys, dressed like parody admirals; the silver bells on the plates; the rich ladies talking and smoking; and the silver-haired maitre d' surveying his domain—is to mount a little stone molding at the window's edge and jump up. That Saturday, searching for a reassuring scene, glanced around to make sure that nobody who knew me was watching, the I walked over to the window, and leaped up and looked.

All the waiters were looking right bac at me. They were standing together, lik a line of B-girls, at the front of a roo full of empty tables. When the top of m head appeared for an instant over th curtains, they noticed. We locked eyes. fell to the sidewalk, and then, curious leaped up again. They were expectin me, and we looked at each other for sad half moment. Then I walked towar the revolving door, looked in, and sa that everyone was manning his station; even saw the maitre d' zipping across th carpeted floor toward his podium, impelled by the mirage of a customer.

I stepped back from the door. thought of striding in, and having th restaurant all to myself, like Edwar Arnold in a Frank Capra movie. But had sneakers on, and only a few dollar in my pocket, so I had lunch in a coffe shop around the corner. I thought, Swee are at least some of the uses of adversity if it can—for a moment, anyway—rob even a French maitre d' of his upright, imperturbable aplomb, disorderin his step with the desire to be needed. ◆





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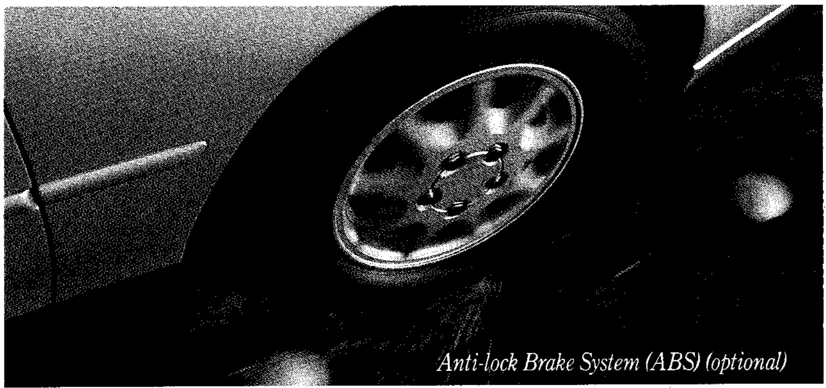
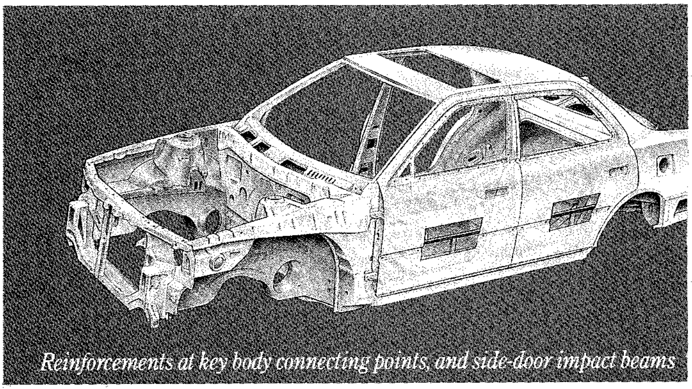
WE'D LOVE TO BRAG ABOUT THE CAMRY, BUT INSTEAD WE'LL SHOW SOME RESTRAINT.



Anti-lock Brake System (ABS) (optional)



Reinforcements at key body connecting points, and side-door impact beams

Driver-side air bag Supplemental Restraint System (SRS)*

"I love what you do for me."

TOYOTA

*Always use your seatbelt. Driver-side air bag is a supplemental restraint system. Buckle Up! Do it for those who love you. © 1992 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.